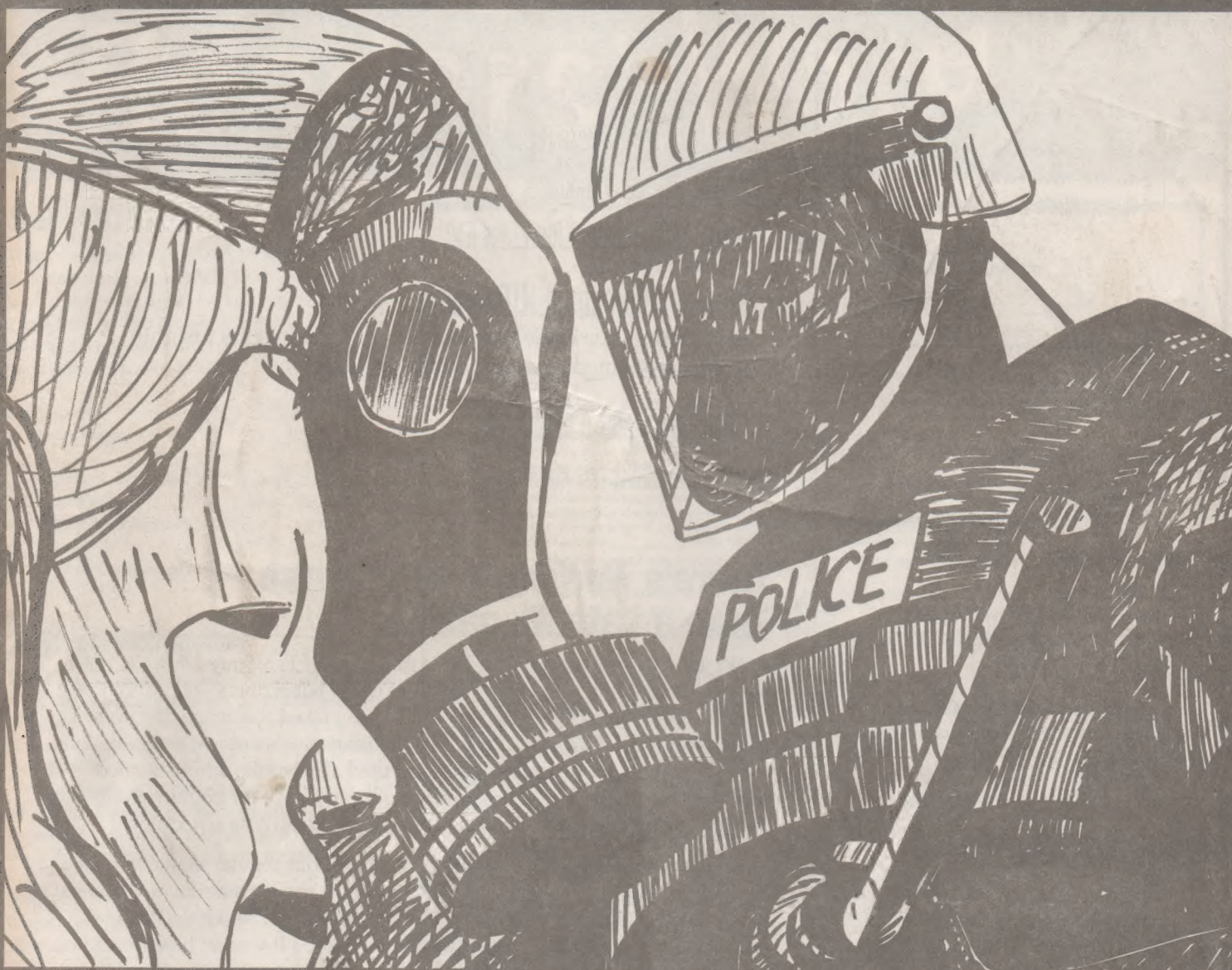


\$3.50 U.S.  
\$5.00 Earth

D I S P A T C H F O U R

# PARASCOPE

<http://www.parascope.com>



## WTO SEATTLE

N30 and the Global Campaign for Democracy, Justice and Autonomy

A report from the street. Plus: Norman Solomon on the mass media's reaction to the WTO protests.



**Charles Overbeck**

Editor, Art Director

**Ruffin Prevost**

Publisher

**Jon Elliston**

Paul B. Thompson

Donald Trull

Associate Editors

**hera c.**

Special Assignments Editor

**Alfredo Garcia**

Adrian McGrath

Correspondents

**Subscriptions:**

6 issues (1 year) = \$18

12 issues = \$30

24 issues = \$50

Sample Copy = \$4.00

Subscribe online:

<http://www.parascope.com/magazine/subscribe.htm>**ParaScope**

[Editorial Command Center]

1430 Willamette PMB #329

Eugene, OR 97401

<http://www.parascope.com>[parascope@parascope.com](mailto:parascope@parascope.com)**ON THE COVER:**

"Sheepless in Seattle," magic marker and posterboard sketch by Charles Overbeck. Pen & ink illustrations on pages 11, 20, and 29 by Charles Overbeck, from original photographs by Alan Pittman.

**CONTENTS:****WTO Seattle: N30**

A street-level account of the November 30, 1999, mobilization against the World Trade Organization. [page 4]

**Why We Were There**

If you're not quite sure what a WTO is, or why people are up in arms about it, read this first. [page 11]

**Poem: tuesday** [page 15]**Poem: Why We Are Here for the WTO Ministerial Summit** [page 20]**Sidebar: Chemical Weapons** [page 26]**Sidebar: FBI "Terrorist Alert" for N30** [page 27]**Norman Solomon on WTO Seattle**

Esteemed media critic Norman Solomon shares his insights on corporate media coverage of N30. [page 30]

**WTO Seattle Videos & Resources** [page 38]**Related Weblinks (N30, A16, M1V2H)** [page 39]**There's *Nothing* I Hate Worse Than a Late Magazine.**

That's why I'm pretending this is the first issue of *ParaScope Dispatch*, not the fourth. In many ways, this *is* the first issue. Subscribers will notice the format change to offset newsprint; folks who picked this magazine up at a newsstand will notice that... well, that the magazine's not just available by subscription anymore. In fact, it's distributed all over the whole durned country now. At the rate we're going, we should have no trouble taking over the entire corporate media establishment by 2012, as scheduled.

Some folks may also notice that we've replaced our regular magazine with a special edition focusing entirely on the People's mass mobilization against the World Trade Organization on Tuesday, November 30, 1999. (We'll be returning to our regular content lineup next issue.) It was an historic and revolutionary gathering. The global elite are now on notice: the People are aware of their plans, we do not approve, and we intend to resist — non-violently, but militantly, with a confrontational attitude.

N30 was our Boston Tea Party, but A16 is coming up fast. On April 16-17, another mass direct action will take place — this time in Washington, D.C., against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. A16 promises to be even larger than N30, potentially drawing more than 100,000 people for this next battle against the New World Order. You won't need weapons for this battle — just bring yourself, a camera, and as many friends as you can drag along. Oh, and don't forget your gas mask!

Salute,

Charles Overbeck

**ParaScope**

© 2000 ParaScope, Inc. Feel free to photocopy for friends.



S. IF YOU HAVE A LIST OF  
IN HOUSE ELECTROMAGNETIC  
TERROR RADIO HYPO CONTROL  
PSYCHO SURGERY MASERS  
ZAPPING SLEEP DEPRIVATION  
I WOULD APPRECIATE  
LIST OR ZINES (MIND CONTROL).

In the Chora Gang  
Got no money. Thanks  
Got free to prisoners  
Crazy here like  
bad disneyland  
I hate it...  
but I love it



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION  
Returned Letter or Funds Notification

PLEASE SEND IN PLAIN BROWN INCONSPICUOUS WRAPPING  
PLEASE DESTROY THIS CARD WHEN FINISHED  
PLEASE SEND CATALOG IF YOU HAVE ONE

SAN QUENTIN  
STATE PRISON

Letter: ☒ Unauthorized enclosure.  
☐ Discussion of criminal activity.  
☐ Unauthorized correspondent.  
☐ Other, see comment section.  
  
Publication  
☐ Unauthorized Publication; see comment section  
  
Comments: Envelopes - Paper

# Readers' Word

correspondence rec'd & acknowledged

## Subj: WTO Seattle

Thank you so much for your [WTO Seattle videotape]. It is very much appreciated. I will remember that day for the rest of my life — and with your help — I will have an easier way of communicating and sharing the experience with my own family, friends, and children. Thank you again.

Maria Weber  
Eugene, Oregon

Thanks Maria. We've had a lot of positive feedback on WTO Seattle: N30, even though it was a "quick & dirty" edit job. There are dozens of WTO Seattle videos circulating; see page 38 for a list of a few of the tapes, although there are many, many more out there. —Charles Overbeck

## Subj: InTERRORgation

Thank you for the manual InTERRORgation because it really shed a lot of light on my personal observations of present incidents occurring regularly in the Texas Correctional System. I've been expressing and voicing the "voices in my head" for a while now in my poetry and journalism of a "Your Man" in Amerika. I'm struggling to exhibit my writings on the Internet. I hope to hear from you soon as I will submit some work to you real soon. Thank you for caring.

Word,  
Cornelius C. Johnson #687974  
Tennessee Colony, Texas

I'm glad our reprint of the CIA's 1963 interrogation manual was enlightening to you, Cornelius. Other prisoners have also informed us that the manual has provided considerable insights into their treatment — and, in some cases, outright torture — by correctional authorities. Please do send your poetry and articles, because we're planning a special "Prisoners' Voice" issue for sometime during the next year. —Charles Overbeck

### NEWTON CORRECTIONAL FACILITY NOTICE OF REJECTION OF INCOMING/OUTGOING MAIL

NAME: Christopher Kentline NUMBER: 1102558 UNIT: E DATE: 1-20-2000  
INCOMING MAIL FROM: ParaScope 1430 W. 11th Ave. #329 Eugene, OR  
OUTGOING MAIL FOR: 97401

- ☒ Contains threats of physical harm against any person, threats or plans of criminal activity, or threats of blackmail or extortion.
- ☐ Concerns plans for activities in violation of institutional rules or escape.
- ☐ Is in code and/or its contents are not understood by the reader; and/or is written in foreign language which is not the language of inmate.
- ☐ Contains information which, if communicated, would create a clear and present danger of violence and physical harm to a human being and/or property.
- ☐ Contains personal checks which are not acceptable. Only cashiers checks or postal money orders are allowed for deposit into an inmate's account. The letter will be delivered to the inmate. The personal check with check number \_\_\_\_\_ in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ will be returned to sender. Please provide a return envelope.
- ☐ Is written by a person who is under 18 years of age, is not an immediate family member, and does not have written parental permission to correspond.
- ☐ Is from/to another institution and the writer is not approved to correspond.
- ☐ Contains letter for two inmates or involves a third party.
- ☐ Contains pornographic material/inappropriate picture(s).

### Naughty Bad Contraband

For the past year, ParaScope has been distributing copies of the Central Intelligence Agency's 1963 interrogation manual free to indigent prisoners nationwide. Many of these prisoners have written back to us stating that the manual's proscriptions for physical and psychological coercion are standard practice in Amerikkka's prisons. Several prisoners have stated their intentions to use the manual as evidence in upcoming civil trials against their jailors.

Approximately 5% of the manuals we send out free to prisoners are either seized by prison authorities or returned with explanations such as ones shown on this page. One prison facility seized the manual because it "contains threats of physical harm against any person, threats or plans of criminal activity, or threats of blackmail or extortion" (see above). Of course, the "threats" and "criminal activity" discussed in the document were perpetrated solely by the CIA. Another prison — Tomoka Correctional Facility in Florida — impounded the manual because the "Entire book presents a threat to security, good order, or discipline of the institution" (see below). ParaScope will continue to distribute the manual as widely as possible.

If the publication was IMPOUNDED per criteria established in Section (2) of Rule 33-3.012, FAC, the following details: the specific written or pictorial matter that is believed to be inadmissible, and lists the page numbers in the publication where it is found.  
Entire book presents a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the institution

Share your views & swap info on ParaScope's Web Message Boards at:

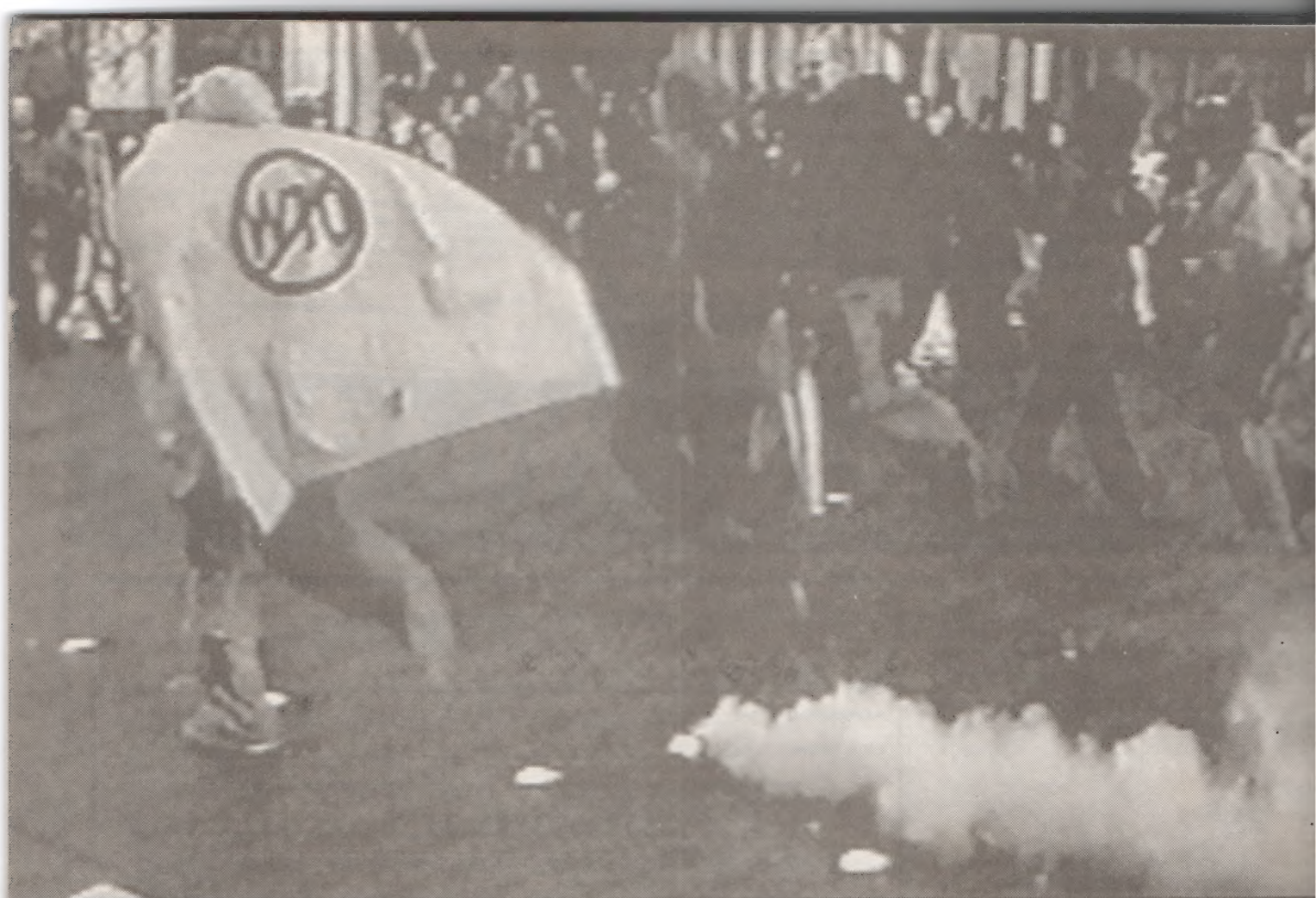
<http://www.parascope.com/other/wwwboard/index.htm>

Got a suggestion? A hot tip? A few words of wisdom you'd like to share? Drop us a line at:

1430 Willamette #329, Eugene, OR 97401 email: [parascope@parascope.com](mailto:parascope@parascope.com)









# WTO Seattle: N30

## A Report From the Street

by Charles Overbeck [easterisle@parascopes.com](mailto:easterisle@parascopes.com)

### Interlogue

The staccato snapping of a string of firecrackers sounded down Pike Street — about two blocks from us, judging by the volume. A few moments later came a crisp, bowel-bumping **BOOM**, followed quickly by another, louder and deeper than gunshots. Were protesters overturning dumpsters? Had something just been slammed onto the asphalt?

Down the street floated a thin acrid haze that smelled like freshly ejected shotgun shells. Those weren't dumpsters being tipped over. Acting as one, everyone on Pike Street turned toward the sound and started moving.

Just minutes earlier, I had witnessed a spontaneous gathering of thousands of human beings joining in perfect harmony, sitting in the street to sing together and share five minutes of silence with protesters around the world.

Moments later, I would witness the most violent spectacle I'd ever seen, as police assaulted non-violent demonstrators with chemical weapons and concussion grenades.

It was 3:15 p.m., November 30, 1999. We were in downtown Seattle to take direct action against the World Trade Organization.

We shut the motherfuckers down.

OPPOSITE, TOP: A WTO protester flees a tear gas canister fired at his feet.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Seattle riot police. (Photo by Kurt Jensen.)

BACKGROUND: A demonstrator hurls a tear gas grenade back at the police during a skirmish after dark on November 30. (Video still from *RIP WTO N30*. See p. 38)



# Thunder on the Horizon

The resistance started gaining momentum about two years ago. For decades, small groups and solitary voices had been warning about the dangers of transnational corporate globalism, more recently protesting the inevitably detrimental effects of "free" trade treaties such as NAFTA and GATT. In 1995, GATT spawned the World Trade Organization, an international group set up to establish and enforce the global rules of commerce. The WTO was given unprecedented powers over the world economy, and individual nations were required to bind themselves arbitrarily to WTO decisions in order to participate.

In the United States, many activists heavily resisted the push for the WTO, working hard through grassroots efforts to inform Congress and the public about the dire economic and environmental consequences of GATT and the WTO. Unfortunately, the resistance campaign simply wasn't strong enough at that time, and the battle was lost. The World Trade Organization became a reality.

Through the latter half of the 1990's, the New World Order quickly gained ground on all fronts. Sweatshops, *maquiladora* factories and slave labor camps began popping up like rancid mushrooms along the multilateral corridors of "free trade." As U.S. manufacturing jobs hemorrhaged from the domestic arena, prison slave workers became corporate America's cheapest new labor pool, rivaling the pennies-per-hour wages found in less industrialized nations. Scarcely a breath of news was heard in the mainstream media about these disturbing trends. Rather, word seeped out in bits and pieces across the Internet and through small-circulation magazines and newspapers.

It took several years before the movement began to reach critical mass, yet the People's opposition was organizing and steadily growing. In January 1998, the elitist World Economic Forum convened its annual meeting at a secretive enclave in Davos, Switzerland. The group called "People's Global Action Against 'Free' Trade and the WTO" held their own summit simultaneously in Geneva, releasing their "Declaration Against the Globalisers of Misery," a statement denouncing the Davos meeting.

The PGA meeting served as a training and organizing session for a worldwide campaign of resistance against exploitative economic systems. People's Global Action called for:

1. A clear rejection of the WTO and other trade liberalization agreements (like APEC, the EU, NAFTA, etc.) as "active promoters of a socially and environmentally destructive globalization."
2. A confrontational attitude, "since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organizations, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker."
3. A call to non-violent civil disobedience and "the construction of local alternatives by local people, as answers to the actions of governments and corporations."
4. An organizational philosophy based on decentralization and autonomy.

Five months later, in May 1998, an estimated 5,000 demonstrators marched during the World Trade Organization summit in Geneva to peacefully protest the neoliberal free trade system advocated by the WTO, which they blamed for increasing poverty and financial instability worldwide.

After the march, masked youths tore through the city, burning cars and breaking store windows, and overturning a WTO envoy's limousine. Called "casseurs," or "smashers," these youths were accused of using the peaceful march as an excuse for a destructive rampage. Police in full riot gear unleashed a tear gas assault and tightened a barricade-and-barbed-wire blockade around Geneva's international sites.

Meanwhile, "Global Street Party 98" was happening worldwide. In Prague, Czech Republic, an estimated 3,000 radical youths joined in a demonstration against the impact of multinational corporations on the environment. After protesters blocked the main avenue through Prague, riot police were called in to stop the demonstration. Without issuing a request for the crowd to disperse, a line of 28 policemen tried to use their truncheons break up the march. The crowd managed to drive the police back without incurring serious injuries. Afterwards, when a police car drove through the crowd at high speed, demonstrators overturned the vehicle but did not attack its occupants.

Later that night, a small group of protesters broke windows at Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonalds, as 150 demonstrators looked on. The Prague police, who had rallied and had been reinforced, unleashed a vicious assault, beating protesters and bystanders alike. Police arrested 64 people, who were physically abused, interrogated and humiliated in prison throughout the night. Injured arrestees who had been taken to the hospital were beaten by police in the presence of physicians. Czech officials reacted with a proposal to create a special police commando unit of 500 men trained to quickly neutralize political demonstrations.

Obviously, something was building. Its organization was still loose; its numbers were still few. But revolutionary counterforces of global resistance were steadily aggregating, as each successive incident clarified and solidified the issues of the People's collective campaign for justice.

On June 18, 1999, activists worldwide took to the streets for Global Street Party 99, now better known as "J18." Timed to coincide with the G8 economic superpowers summit in Cologne, Germany, the scale of the demonstrations was much larger this time, the actions more numerous, the spirit more invigorated and assertive. Police arrested 37 people in New York City, where demonstrators blockaded the New York Stock Exchange with a street carnival. In Washington, D.C., 600 protesters formed a human chain around the Justice Department. Enthusiastic demonstrations took place in San Francisco, Los Angeles and cities around the world.

In Eugene, Oregon, a now-infamous J18 clash occurred between 300 demonstrators — environmentalists, pacifists and anarchists — and the Eugene Police Department, a law enforcement agency with a history of flagrant human rights abuses, such as hosing a protester's testicles with pepper spray. Along the demonstration route, a few marchers smashed some windows and signs at a few banks and fast food restaurants, as well as the front window of a locally-owned furniture store.

At first, the police kept their distance, pacing the crowd from behind. After demonstrators dispersed without incident into a public park, the riot squad unexpectedly launched tear gas canisters



into the crowd. Soon afterwards, police attacked protesters with pepper spray while they selectively targeted specific activists for arrest. Enraged by the police assault, the anarchists again took to the streets and smashed more windows. Demonstrators and non-participant bystanders, including children, suffered the excruciating effects of tear gas as its grayish-white clouds floated out of control on the summer breeze.

## **ParaScope's editorial headquarters have been located**

in Eugene for three years. I missed J18, but discrepancies between the police and demonstrators' accounts of the day's events aroused my curiosity. In particular, my "Big Brother" alarm was set off by a highly propagandistic — and frequently broadcast — videotape clip of anarchists jumping up and down on the hoods and roofs of passing automobiles. When word of a follow-up march on July 16 got around, I decided to check it out and file a report.

In the days preceding the July 16 march, a small army of law enforcement and military personnel assembled for the event, including a special "rapid deployment" SWAT force from the State Police, the Eugene Police Department's rapid deployment SWAT team (including armored personnel carrier), and swarms of patrol officers in cruisers and on motorcycles and bikes. Two hundred and fifty National Guard troops were also reportedly put on alert.

I witnessed absolutely no actions of a provocative nature on the part of the demonstrators. Police angrily ordered anarchists to remove their black masks, which they wore to protect their identities from police videographers, who are suspected of videotaping demonstrations to compile intelligence files on political dissidents. (The local District Attorney has given the Eugene Police Department a "green light" to identify anyone wearing a mask. A police officer videotaped every moment of the July 16 demonstration.)

The demonstrators marched several blocks to a public park, where they separated into groups to discuss civil disobedience, progressive political programs and the issues of globalization, environmental degradation, police brutality, citizens' rights, and many other topics of concern. While protesters took turns speaking their minds, a collection was taken up to compensate local businesses for property damage inflicted on June 18. Police cruisers and motorcycle patrols took positions at all entrance and exit points to the park. Arms crossed, gas masks at the ready, the cops intensely surveyed the gathering, which voluntarily dispersed after about three hours.

Thanks to paranoia and hysterical media reports preceding the event, this completely non-violent political gathering of about 100 people drew a heavily-armed police and military force which outnumbered the demonstrators by a factor of about three to one.

I stayed for some time after the gathering dispersed, talking with a small group of folks I'd never met until that day, discussing a wide range of topics — transnational corporatization, mind control, Operation Paperclip, you name it. As we digressed, a Lane County Sheriff's Department helicopter flew over the nearly empty park, escorted by a National Guard helicopter.

A newsman from one of the local TV stations was hanging around to do a live "after action report" at 6 p.m., so we seized the opportunity to beleaguer him with questions about the media "conspiracy" which, to us, seemed so obvious and overt. He claimed to have read some of Noam Chomsky's books, including

## **"Brothers and sisters of Africa, Asia, America, Europe and Oceania:**

**"We declare:**

**"First.** That we will make a collective network of all our particular struggles and resistances. An intercontinental network of resistance against neoliberalism, an intercontinental network of resistance for humanity. This intercontinental network of resistance, recognizing differences and acknowledging similarities, will search to find itself with other resistances around the world. This intercontinental network of resistance will be the medium in which distinct resistances may support one another. This intercontinental of resistance is not an organizing structure; it doesn't have a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist.

**"Second.** That we will make a network of communication among all our struggles and resistances. An intercontinental network of alternative communication against neoliberalism, an intercontinental network of alternative communication for humanity. This intercontinental network of alternative communication will search to weave the channels so that words may travel all the roads that exist. This intercontinental network of alternative communication will be the medium by which distinct resistances communicate with one another. This intercontinental network of alternative communication is not an organizing structure; nor has a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist."

—From the *Second Declaration of la Realidad for Humanity and against Neoliberalism, EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army), La Realidad, Planet Earth, August 3, 1996*

*Manufacturing Consent*, but he offered no specific comments past vaguely stating that Chomsky "had some interesting things to say." He casually dismissed our concerns about censorship due to media consolidation. His ears perked up a bit when we discussed the visual shock/ratings value of repeatedly showing footage of anarchists breaking windows, as opposed to other possible portrayals, such as showing the anarchists gathering peacefully to discuss rampant and widespread police brutality, or to organize a free school program. But again, he committed no specific comments. At one point, however, he mentioned that "there are certain ways of saying things, using your voice and gestures, to be more convincing to the audience," and he said that he had been trained in these methods — an apparent reference to neurolinguistic programming. (A course on neurolinguistic programming is offered by the Theater department at the University of Oregon in Eugene.)

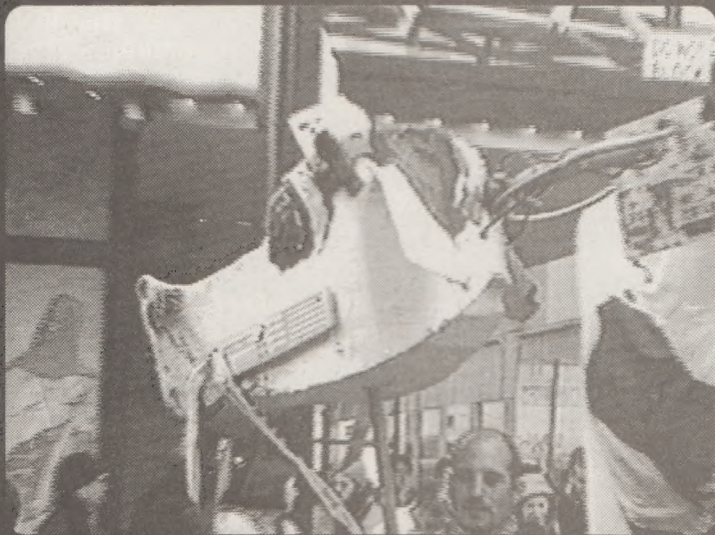
When we were done harassing the harried mainstream journalist with our fringy questions, we walked for a while, shook hands and parted. It was good to actually go outside, get together with a bunch of people, and realize that we shared remarkably similar concerns. I also knew for sure what I had already suspected: that the media had dreadfully misled the public about the anarchists.

In July 1999, no one knew that the World Trade Organization would meet in Seattle in November. But soon, murmurs of a mass action against the WTO began humming across the countryside. By October, the murmurs had built into a thunder on the horizon. Off in the distance, the drums were beating, over and over:

WTO Seattle... WTO Seattle... WTO Seattle...

N30.





#### **this page:**

**TOP:** Labor activists flood into the Memorial Center stadium on the morning of N30.

**MIDDLE:** Cowborg, the genetically modified, BGH-enhanced übercow.

**BOTTOM:** A guerrilla theater ensemble performs a ritualistic funerary rite for the victims of neoliberal globalization.

#### **opposite page:**

**TOP:** Cowborg's escort, a giant "Monsanto" puppet, sows the seeds of satire.

**UPPER, LOWER MIDDLE:** The giant puppets unified artistic and political expression.

**BOTTOM:** The "New World Order" pyramid diagrammed the hierarchy of global power.

## An Uprising of the Soul

Like old photographs, memories fade over time. But I'll never forget November 30, 1999, as long as I live. I'll never forget a minute of it. After all, it's not every day that you get to see a revolution born.

Originally, we were going to catch a ride on the Alliance for Democracy bus. Then Ashley found out that her graduate teachers' union was sending two vans, and we could get onboard for just a few bucks. So we hooked it up.

At the pre-N30 debriefing for our affinity group, the question was raised of whether or not "we wanted to get arrested." This seemed rather strange and naive. Does anyone really ever *want* to get arrested? Is it something we can really control? Perhaps a better question would have been, "are we going up there to lock ourselves down and be a stationary part of the physical blockade?" At any rate, the overwhelming consensus was that nobody "wanted to be arrested." Therefore, everyone was expected to be at the rendezvous point for egress at 1730 hours, sharp!

As the days before N30 slid tensely past, we waited, starving for early news from Seattle. Hundreds of activists were already there, participating in teach-ins and making preparations for the mass mobilization. Several arrests had been made on the front lines. TV news programs showed black-armored riot police in downtown Seattle, posing and marching like an elite cadre of Darth Vader's stormtroopers.

We embarked at 4:00 a.m. on November 30, a dozen of us in each van, dozing as I-5 streamed dreamily beneath us at 80 miles per hour. I brought a black knapsack full of fruit, bagels, pasta, bottled water, a change of clothes, a first aid kit and my trusty camcorder. One of the guys from our affinity group recommended a sort of "riot cocktail" countermeasure: he said that lemon juice and salt, placed under the tongue, could counteract the effects of tear gas. Ashley had picked up some lemons, but we had left them with the salt at home by mistake. Oh well — the idea of trying to get lemon juice and salt under our tongues while being tear gassed was just too surreal, anyway.

We rolled into Seattle at 9:30 a.m., pretty good time from Eugene. Serendipitously, we found spaces at a parking lot about one block from the Memorial Center stadium, where the labor union rally was just getting underway.

After a bit of meandering and collective bathroom-hunting, our affinity group agreed to a couple of rendezvous times and locations, whereupon we separated into several splinters. Ashley and I were dead set on heading directly to the convention center where the WTO meeting was to be convened, after we checked out the union rally. Ken, one of the guys from our affinity group, asked whether we'd mind if he joined us. I remembered seeing Ken at the debriefing a few nights before. He's a friendly and instantly likable guy, and we were glad to have some company.

Our first stop was the Memorial Center stadium. As we walked onto the field, union activists crowded high in the bleachers were bellowing enthusiastic chants. The stadium's capacity exceeded 50,000, and the place was filling up fast from the field to the stands. A huge domed stage sat at the end of the field, complete with amplifiers and a large-screen video monitor. Everywhere, union members carried wholesome, all-American-sounding signs, like "If it doesn't work for working families, it doesn't work" and "Fair trade, not free trade."

Yet the stadium was brimming with a diverse convergence of workers from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and many Southern nations. Amidst the mass-produced AFL-CIO banners were a



variety of homemade signs expressing a multitude of views on globalization and exploitation. We stood there for a while, absorbing it all, as a military helicopter slowly buzzed the arena. In a few hours, everyone in the stadium would march to the convention center to participate in the mass mobilization against the WTO. In solidarity with the demonstrators, Seattle taxi drivers had called a total strike for November 30, depriving WTO delegates of one mode of transportation. Also in solidarity with the protesters, the Longshoremen closed every port on the west coast of the United States for three hours. It was one of the biggest labor rallies in U.S. history. That, in itself, was a victory. The place was electrified.

We were eager to move to the heart of the protests, though. The quickest way to get there was that silly little Seattle Center monorail, which dumped us into a luxurious hive of high-end consumption — a shopping mall full of meaningless overpriced crap slung amidst the co-opted corporatized appeal of faux Bohemianism. We rushed down the escalators, trying not to breathe.

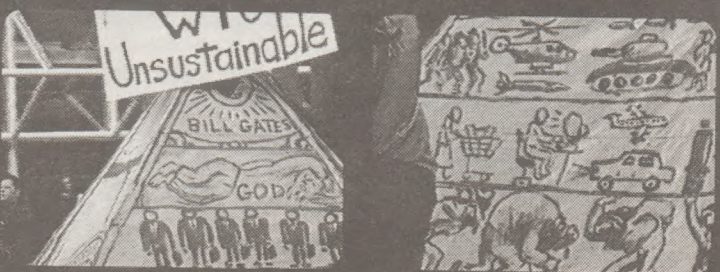
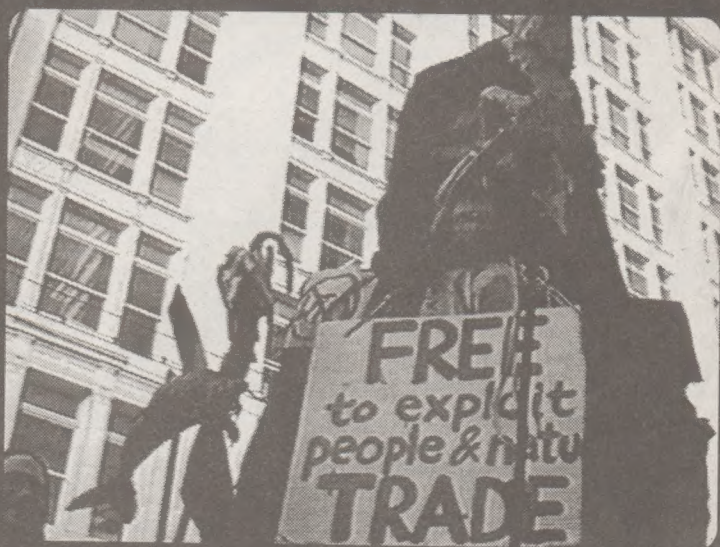
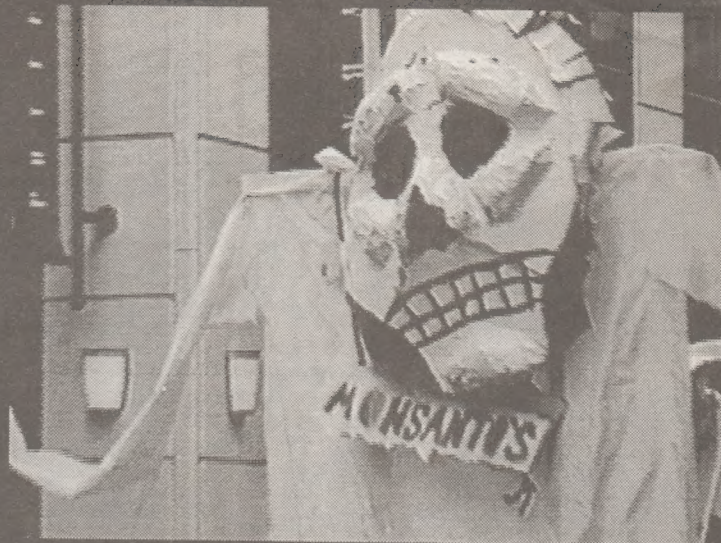
Out, onto cloudy 5th Avenue, busy with foot traffic. We were getting closer. Up the street, we encountered a black-clad street theater ensemble performing a ritualistic funerary rite for the victims of neoliberal globalization. Mourners wept bitterly over child-sized coffins as a somber protester burned dollar bills, one after the other, the flaming ashes falling at the mourners' feet. A ridiculous heckler with a bullhorn badgered them continuously. He was adorned with a sign reading, "REPENT! FOR THE END IS NEAR!" and he advised them to seek truth in Christ. Each sentence that crackled from his bullhorn brought renewed weeping from the mourners.

We continued up 5th, passing a spectacular parade of puppets and political floats. A gigantic puppet glided past us, escorted by a woman on stilts shaking improvised percussion instruments. A printed storyboard unfurled along the puppet's bedsheet arms, which spanned the full width of the street. A spooky 16-foot-tall "shadow of death" puppet walked in its wake, wearing a sign that read: "FREE to exploit people & nature TRADE."

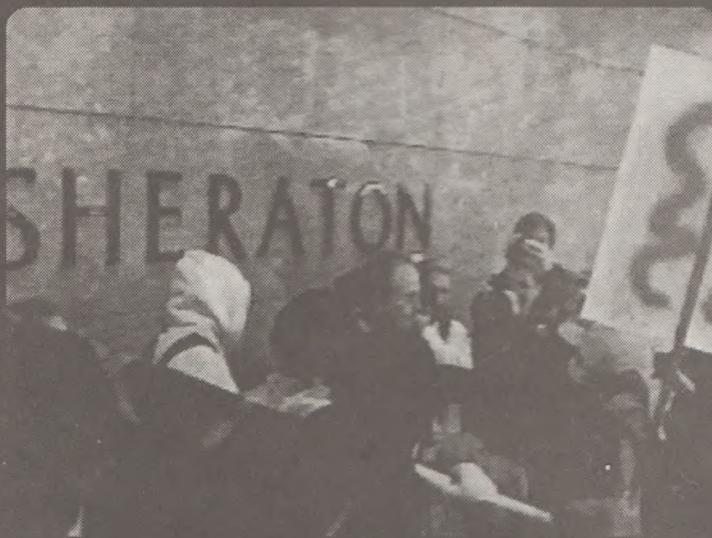
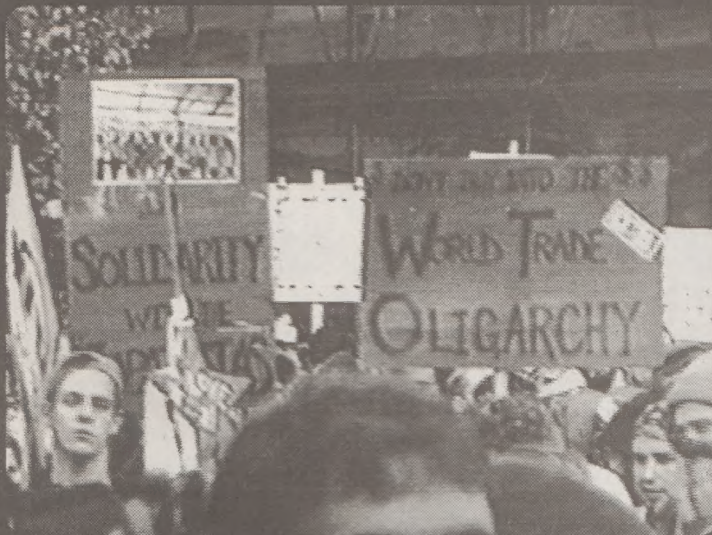
"Cowborg," the genetically-engineered, bovine-growth-hormone-enhanced übercow, also walked the street, mooing blissfully along under the demonic spell of a 14-foot puppet representing Monsanto. Behind them rolled a "New World Order pyramid" at which diagrammed the unsustainable hierarchy of global corporate power. Naturally, Bill Gates was at the top of the pyramid, followed by God, followed by the military-industrial complex, followed by minions of corporate "suits," followed by droning consumers, followed by the anonymous masses laboring at the bottom of the pyramid, their backs bending and breaking under the weight.

The artists' creativity and cleverness were truly impressive and inspiring. Parading on the outskirts of the convention center area, the puppets and street theater provided a cognitive transition from the relatively calm city streets to the intense anti-corporate rage ahead. The artists' many hours of work converted the asphalt to a carnival of political energy, visually expressing the demonstrators' key concerns about the World Trade Organization and the ideology it embodies.

As we hung a right on Pike, we found the street tight with thousands of demonstrators. The crowd became much denser as we headed up Pike Street toward the Washington State Convention







**TOP:** Protesters on the ledge of Pike Tower display the overriding message of the day.

**MIDDLE:** Signs of the times. Homemade signs by the thousands bobbed above the streets of downtown Seattle, expressing a vast range of social and political concerns.

**BOTTOM:** Blockade tactics — a group of protesters surrounds a WTO delegate (center of photo) at the Sheraton Hotel entrance, shouting "GO HOME! GO HOME! GO HOME!" The Sheraton reportedly contains an underground tunnel into the convention center.

and Trade Center — the "Death Star." After crossing 6th Avenue, we decided to hug the wall and check things out. It was 10:30 a.m.

We found a spot against the windows of the F.A.O. Schwarz toy store, across the street from the Sheraton Hotel. Protesters crammed every square foot of space on the sidewalks, streets and the intersection. Dozens of home-made signs bobbed above the crowd:

- "WTO: Global Cops For Global Corps"
- "Critters Against Corporate Oligarchy"
- "Stop Patents on Life!"
- "Senators who ratified U.S. entry to the WTO should be tried for TREASON"
- "World Trade Organization: Global Government for the Rich"
- "WTO: Political Prisoners Are Forced to Produce Your Luxuries"
- "Capitalism Destroys All Life"
- "Greed+Ignorance=WTO"
- "Free' Trade is Slave Trade"
- "Stop Exploiting Workers"
- "Unfair Trade Destroys American Jobs"
- "\$Don't Buy into the\$\$ World Trade Oligarchy"
- "In Solidarity With the Zapatistas"
- "Resist Corporate Tyranny — The People Have Spoken!"
- "Subvert the Corporate Paradigm — Buy Local"
- "Visualize Corporate Collapse — Resist the WTO!"
- "Organize the Non-Organized! No Separate Peace!"
- "No Globalization Without Representation"
- "End Child Labor"
- "No More NAFTAs"
- "End Clearcuts — STOP WTO"
- "WTO: Trading Away Our Forests"
- "Forests For Communities Not Profit"
- "Stop Corporate Globalism"
- "Free Mumia Abu Jamal"
- "Democracy, Not WTO Hypocrisy"

Some of the signs relayed their messages through humor:

- "WTO: World Thieving Organization"
- "Make Love, Not Profits! FUCK THE WTO!"
- "Freeze Beer Prices"
- "Gabba Gabba Hey!"

The Sheraton Hotel reportedly contained an underground tunnel into the convention center, making it a key access point for WTO delegates. In front of the Sheraton, protesters had locked themselves to obstacles, to establish a foothold against police attempts to clear the street. Hundreds of demonstrators surrounded them for support, sitting and crouching, beating drums, and shouting "End corporate greed! Take back the power!" and "No! To! WTO!" Facing them at arms was a line of "Starship Troopers" — a special riot control battalion of the Seattle Police, clad head-to-toe in padded suits of body armor.

The riot police were officially called "hard teams," and their battle dress lived up to the name. Their uniforms completely concealed their identities, transforming them from individual human beings into anonymous, interchangeable stand-ins for the authority of the state. The "hard team" officer's face was tucked snugly behind the black rubber of his gas mask. The officer's eyes were barely visible in the shadows of his gas mask, riot helmet and plexiglas faceshield. His body was covered in thick black padded armor, meticulously streamlined to integrate ease of motion with total coverage. Over his shoulder dangled a radio microphone; at his



# Why We Were There

It is impossible to even scratch the surface of the globalization issue in such a small space. But here are just a few of the reasons why 80,000 people mobilized against the World Trade Organization on November 30, 1999. To learn more about these issues, seek out the resources listed on this page.

**WE EAT.** The WTO regulates the standards to which our food is grown, processed, and sold to us. The WTO determines the labor and environmental practices that determine how our food is grown. Without exception, the WTO has advocated the perpetuation of monopolistic corporate agribusinesses, wiping out food cooperatives, family farms and small agricultural producers. In every instance, the WTO has ruled against member countries' attempts to safeguard their citizens' health and well-being by protecting farmers and consumers.

**WE WORK.** The WTO sets the standards by which employers determine who to hire, how much to pay them, what kind of benefits to distribute, and the safety conditions of the workplace. In the United States, prison labor has skyrocketed since the WTO's ratification in 1995. Workers are abused and exploited in factories and sweatshops around the globe, as corporations continue to seek out cheaper, more pliant labor pools.

**WE BREATHE.** On behalf of the Venezuelan oil industry, the WTO ruled against the U.S. Clean Air Act, placing a higher priority on profits for oil companies than clean air for living people.

## WE SEEK KNOWLEDGE.

Math programs designed by M&M Candies have already entered our school systems. The WTO intends to create educational standards that limit public sector educational services to levels determined by CEOs and transnational corporations.

**WE LIVE.** In the engineered economy of the New World Order, corporations and powerful industrialized nations are raising their own standards of living by exploiting the lives, resources and lands of peoples in the "Two-thirds World." Those who live as individuals within this larger economic paradigm have a responsibility as human beings to understand the reality of the global economy, and to resist the policies of corporate domination.

**Sources:** Global Exchange; People's Global Action; International Forum on Globalization.

## To Learn More, Read:

### Invisible Government: The WTO Global Government for a New Millennium?

This primer was prepared by the International Forum on Globalization, which held a two-day teach-in on globalization just prior to the Seattle mobilization. The best concise source of information on WTO-related issues. Copies of this primer are available for \$7 each from the International Forum on Globalization, 1555 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94109 ([www.ifg.org](http://www.ifg.org)).

**The WTO: Five Years of Reasons to Resist Corporate Globalization,** Lori Wallach, Open Media Pamphlet Series, 2000. ISBN: 1583220356.

**Corporations Are Gonna Get Your Momma,** Kevin Danaher, Common Courage Press, 1997. ISBN: 1567511120.

**When Corporations Rule The World,** David C. Korten, Berrett-Koehler Publisher's, 1996. ISBN: 1887208011.

**The Case Against Free Trade: GATT, NAFTA and the Globalization of Corporate Power,** edited by Ralph Nader, 1993. ISBN: 1556431694.



## NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS VS. CORPORATIONS:

Of the 100 with the most money,  
88 are corporations\*

General Motors, Daimler-Chrysler and  
ExxonMobil revenues together equal the  
combined budgets of 88 nations which  
contain half the world's population.

The IMF, World Bank, NAFTA, and now  
the greatest weapon of economic mass  
destruction, the WTO, are being used to  
tear down all remaining barriers to  
control by global corporations.

\*1998-1999



PIKE STREET

3rd AVENUE

4th AVENUE

5th AVENUE

6th AVENUE

7th AVENUE

Front Entrance  
SHERATON  
HOTELCONVENTION  
CENTER/WTO  
SUMMIT

UNION STREET

## Map of the convention center area.

waist hung a bag for his gas mask and plastic zip-ties for mass arrests; across his chest lay a bandoleer of flash-bang grenades. His heavy black BDU's were tucked into glistening knee-high combat boots that looked like props from some fascist sex fantasy.

The riot police were backed up by an armored "Peacekeeper" vehicle, equipped with hoses for pepper spray and devices for launching concussion grenades and tear gas. The mobile assault platform also offered police an altitude advantage on the flat street surfaces. An officer perching on top clutched a weapon that looked like something from a David Cronenberg movie — black and bulbous, a postmodern weapon for a postmodern battle. (Later, I learned that the gun was actually a rubber bullet rifle fed by a high-capacity magazine, powered by an air compressor. This weapon was repeatedly used throughout the week to inflict pain and wound non-violent demonstrators.)

Diagonally across the intersection, Niketown's narcissistic masturbatoria loomed six stories over the scene. The convention center was just one block up Pike Street, protected by wall of riot police draped in black sheets of rain gear, looking like an army of giant alien bats.

A 16-foot iron teddy bear statue decorated the sidewalk outside the F.A.O. Schwarz toy store. A protester sat on the bear's head, patiently trolling a fishing pole with a donut hooked on the end, apparently hoping to catch a cop or two. The inscription on the bear's back seemed at once utterly absurd and yet strangely fitting, in the context of everything going on around it: "The teddy bear represents playfulness, a spirit of love, and the warmth of big hugs." The bear also had several new inscriptions — anarchy symbols and anti-WTO slogans — courtesy of the spray paint brigade.

I moved in closer toward the armored vehicle, trying to shoot some 8mm footage amidst the tight crowd. It seemed like *everyone*

— cops and demonstrators alike — was wearing a gas mask. A Seattle riot cop wobbled from foot to foot, fingering a six-cylinder grenade launcher. Behind him, a shotgun-wielding sheriff's deputy fidgeted with his gas mask and refitted his combat helmet. The other cops gripped the business ends of their riot batons — a special gift from a retired Seattle law enforcement veteran, who personally equipped the police with weighted three-foot batons for extra head-cracking power. The police seemed tense, but not at all hesitant.

"They were shooting tear gas earlier," said a guy standing next to me.

"No kidding?"

"Yeah, about a half hour ago. All over the street."

"Shit. Thanks..."

I went back and told Ashley and Ken. "Yeah," Ashley said, "there's broken glass..."

Underneath our feet lay shards from one of F.A.O. Schwarz's front windows. I hadn't even noticed. Behind the broken window, flanked by big cuddly teddy bears, security guards and company suits frowned and stared spitefully at the crowd.

The drumming and chanting stopped for a few minutes, leaving the street silent except for feet shuffling along the sidewalks. Then, with a flourish, a group of brightly-clad Korean fisherman at the back of the intersection stood and quickly snaked their way towards the front line, waving their banners as their drummer beat a hard, rapid rhythm. Earlier that morning, just before we had arrived, the Korean fishermen had performed the same maneuver, marching directly into the police line with no intentions of stopping.

The police had unloaded with tear gas and grenades, sending them staggering back in retreat. For a moment, it seemed that once again their plan was to keep going, straight into the police. But then they dropped, positioning themselves in the midst of the people's blockade.



[Gas mask instruction sheet.]

### From Desert Storm to WTO Seattle

During the Gulf War, the Israeli government distributed hundreds of thousands of gas masks to its citizens, to protect them against possible Iraqi chemical weapons attacks. (After all, former U.S. ally Saddam Hussein was not above gassing people in his own country.) When the war ended, most of these gas masks ended up on the burgeoning military surplus market, and they are commonly available from most surplus stores and catalogs for \$10-\$15 each. These same Gulf War gas masks eventually made their way into the hands of political demonstrators in the United States, providing them with a relatively inexpensive countermeasure against chemical weapons attacks from the police.

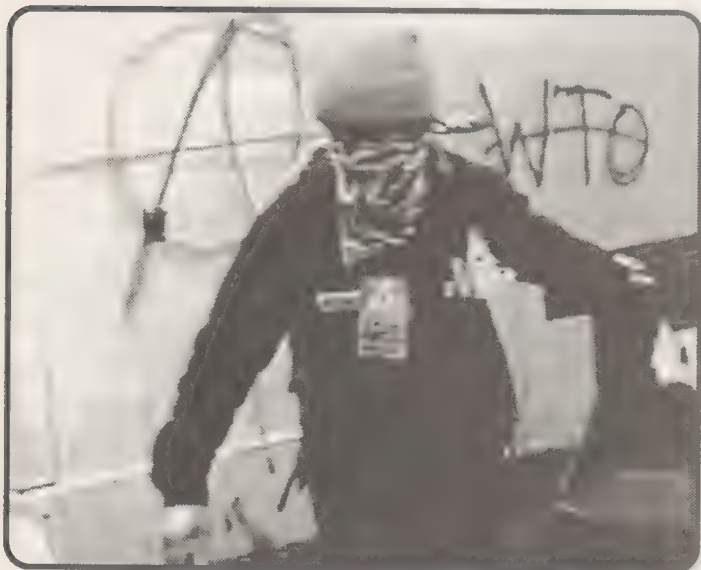


As they sat, the street became silent once more. The tension was thick. You could feel a confrontation taking shape. Some of the people closest to the police began to quickly move away. Just as things seemed to be approaching a flash point, the crowd began chanting, "No violence! No violence! No violence!" over and over, for about two minutes. As the chant tapered off, a group of drummers formed up and began a spirited upbeat rhythm. The tension quickly melted away, and the police eased off a bit.

When it became obvious that things had calmed down, we decided to recon some of the other checkpoints. Police blocked Pike Street halfway between 6th and 7th, so we headed down to 5th Avenue.

Anarchy symbols, anti-WTO slogans and calls for resistance were spray painted all over the storefronts on Pike Street. Well-heeled holiday shoppers strolled unhindered through the protest zone, seemingly oblivious. Along the way, we noticed that a huge plate glass bank window had been crashed. "I hope they have demonstration insurance," Ken gaffed.

At 5th and Pike, police on horseback bolstered a line of riot cops blocking the street. A small crowd of about 120 people, some of them teen-age kids, faced the darkly-clad wall of armed men and horses. Locking arms and holding hands, the demonstrators shouted, "*Fight corporate greed! Take back the power! Fight corporate greed! Take back the power!*" I wondered what the cops must be thinking, behind the shadowy anonymity of their gas masks.



**In dawn's twilight, a direct action group had struck** the alleys around the convention center, rolling all of the commercial dumpsters into the street and overturning them. Newspaper racks were also overturned. These obstacles provided some of the few vantage points available for photographers and camerapeople.

They also provided endless opportunities for improvised percussion. Throughout the day, the thunder of dumpster drums echoed up and down the concrete canyons of Seattle's central business district. Slamming metal lids and 2x4 drumsticks produced a rhythmic voice for the People's dissent: angry, unafraid, and jubilant.

As we walked down Pike Street, two demonstrators hauled a thick iron gutter grating onto an overturned dumpster. Holding it between them, the guy on the left lifted the grating and let it drop, caught it on the bounce, then dropped it again, producing a deep bass **BOOM-BOOM!** The force of the impact shook the ashes from the cigarette on the other demonstrator's lip, but she kept her grip. Their friend, standing across from them, grabbed the dumpster's lid by its handles and slammed it twice, **SLAM-SLAM!** The iron grating gave another cautious beat, and the lid responded. Like a freight train lurching into inertia, they picked up the tempo. **BOOM-BOOM! SLAM-SLAM! BOOM-BOOM! SLAM-SLAM!** A woman who had been watching picked up a stick, playfully danced up and gave the dumpster a few experimental whacks. Then she moved to the dumpster next to them and added her pallet-plank drumming to the mix.

At 4th and Pike, several masked demonstrators jumped up and down on three large dumpsters that had been dragged into the center of the intersection. As they landed in unison, their boots hit a steady backbeat on the steel while an anarchist used the pole of a red-and-black flag as a drumstick, pounding a rapid rhythm into the side of another dumpster. It was the thunder of unbridled freedom. Those dumpsters were probably the only drum set loud enough to produce a sound as big as the N30 mobilization.

Just before 2:00, we headed back toward the heart of the protest at 6th and Pike. The street was getting more crowded every step of the way, and people were really getting into the spirit of things. Several protesters had scaled the side of Pike Tower, hanging a two-story banner showing a rattlesnake coiled around the Earth, reading: "Don't Trade On Me." As they tied down the corners of the banner, the crowd bellowed a triumphant cheer that roared for several minutes, mixed with the victorious braying of brass horns. It was truly a day for celebration, and N30 was shifting into street party mode.

Inching our way up the street, we paused to hear a group of "carolers" singing:

*"The global finance ministers are meeting here today,  
to save us all from citizens' power, for we have gone astray.*

*O-o tidings of comfort and joy, profits oh boy!  
O-o tidings of comfort and joy.*

*In times gone past, democracy has kept our profits down;  
we could not move our factories from town to town to town;  
but now there's no incentive for those plants to stick around.*

*O-o tidings of comfort and joy, profits oh boy!  
O-o tidings of comfort and joy.*

*Remember in the good ol' days, when children worked the mills?  
from morning 'til the sun went down, their hands were never still,  
until those pesky labor laws conspired to thwart our will.*

*Oh-ho tidings of comfort and joy, profits oh boy!  
Oh-ho tidings of comfort and joy.*

*But now there's come a renaissance, for those who have the cash;  
the gap between the rich and poor is growing very fast,  
and soon it seems democracy will disappear at last.*

*Oh-ho tidings of comfort and joy, profits oh boy!  
Oh-ho tidings of comfort and joy."*





**TOP:** A Seattle police "hard team" defends Niketown from the hording masses. (Photo by Kurt Jensen.)

**MIDDLE:** A protester casts down one of the official "WTO Seattle" convention banners hanging over the city streets.

**BOTTOM:** Members of the Rainforest Action Network scale the side of Pike Tower to hang their banner.

The crowd near 6th and Pike was incredibly thick. But it was without a doubt the most *polite* crowd I've ever been in. No one was in a hurry to get anywhere; we were all just jammed in together, making our way step by step. There was no pushing, shoving or rudeness. We were all friends, thousands of anonymous friends, and there's no reason to shove your friends around. Even the weather seemed to be in solidarity with us. For the most part, in spite of a few brief sprinkles and some rainy hours early that morning, the skies had remained relatively calm, with patches of blue sky from time to time. And I swear to you, as we inched our way up Pike, the sun peeked from behind the clouds and cast a rainbow over the street, to the delight of those who had gathered in opposition to transnational corporate hegemony. Surely, a sign!

The labor march from the Memorial Center was expected to bring 30,000 more people into the area, but there was still no actual march in sight. However, with each passing minute, more and more union demonstrators were joining the direct action siege of the convention center. The size of the demonstration was growing fast, so the march had to be nearby. (We didn't know it at the time, but at the last minute, there was an attempt to re-route the AFL-CIO march a few blocks away from the convention center. A lot of folks kept going anyway, following the original route. Apparently, this was why union activists joined the blockade incrementally in clusters, instead of joining in one huge formation.)

Protesters now crowded the second floor balcony ledge around the corner of Pike Tower, which was sprinkled with graffiti: "FUCK THE WTO!" Around the corner, people were partying like it was 1999. A group of drummers went nuts as a knot of people danced, swept into the vortex of the moment, dancing triumphantly in the heart of the protest, starting to *really* wake up to what was going down, to what was happening to all of us, all at once. The dancing was contagious, and soon the whole crowd was into it. Across 6th Avenue, over the store entrance, a couple of protesters started kicking down NikeTown's logo, letter by letter.

After a few minutes, the drummers and dancers took a break, and an ecstatic cheer erupted. The drummers picked up a new beat, and everyone started chanting, "AIN'T NO POWER LIKE THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE 'CAUSE THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE DON'T STOP!" The drummers then moved through the crowd, up 6th Avenue to the center of the intersection with Pike Street, where protesters were physically locked down to a stage-like structure that had been smuggled in early that morning.

As the drummers reached the center, everyone in the area sat together around the "stage," forming a human sphere focusing inward together on a central point. Throughout the day, hundreds of protesters had held this intersection, which had become a key point in the blockade. Thousands more now joined them, cementing the People's control of the area. It was 2:30 p.m. It was time for the Five Minutes of Silence.

For five full minutes, not a whisper was heard in that intersection. People lowered their eyelids and meditated, contemplating the events of the day, contemplating the purpose that had brought them to that moment in history, contemplating the significance of what had happened. Millions across the globe had suffered and died to feed the pathological greed of the viral economic system into which we had been born — conditioned from conception to accept institutionalized atrocity as normality, neatly isolated from the consequences of our actions. But today, things were different. We had finally *done* something about it, something that actually had a serious impact. That understanding, coupled with our new-found solidarity, was tremendously empowering.

Softly at first, accompanied by gentle drumbeats, a calm, steady



# tuesday

On Tuesday we met at a place in the rain,  
to march through Leviathan's shadow.  
We shivered in the dark  
north to the ancient vibration  
of the free. Bones throbbed  
like tuning forks to drums;  
and then we were holding hands  
running to morning's  
meticulously  
imagined bulwarks.

One Tuesday we went free:  
Tyranny choked on the pennants  
of the turtle's legion, her clown and drum;  
and the bobbing, stiff detachment of giants,  
above the rampart of helmets,  
solemn and mocking.

North of the Paramount Theater,  
by eleven or twelve we saw Tuesday's rainbow,  
although by eleven the cops had knocked someone's teeth in  
and although Tuesday's children wept and their skin burned,  
let gentle medics anoint me  
that day we washed tear gas  
and pepper spray,  
the certitude of dominion,  
from each other's burning eye.

On Wednesday of interrogations,  
of checkpoints and gas, we were in jail, sharing a name.  
The city was saved for shopping  
from our voices and our restless feet,  
but the jail is too small for all of us.

Wednesday: the buses I ride every ordinary day  
belong to me, and to you.  
We want to ride them to a more equal world.  
We won't let them be jails; and so,  
we can't walk easy  
into your jail-cells.

It came to pass on Thursday that  
Pharaoh paused. His jails were full.

Tuesday's chanting children returned  
to surround King County jail.

This city and these streets can now be ours:  
As we imagined so we became  
for one day:  
and if a day is not enough;  
enough to begin

—janejohn wto 12/99



PHOTO BY KURT JENSEN









**Elsewhere in Seattle, the Secretary of State of the** United States, one Madeleine Albright, was on the phone raising holy flaming hell to Mayor Paul Schell. Her limousine had been unable to penetrate the People's blockade, and she was royally pissed. We have no way of knowing exactly what was said during this exchange, but the conversation probably consisted of words to this effect: "This shit has to end. Now."

The orders were being given, the machinery set in motion. On the street, we had no way of knowing. After the Five Minutes of Silence, Ashley, Ken and I sort of stood there in a buzzing daze for a while. For myself, it had been an incredibly intense experience. So many things came together in my mind at that one point — it was as if, out of nowhere, I'd found something that I'd been missing my entire life. I felt whole.

High overhead, a helicopter swung around a skyscraper and hovered over the crowd, almost as if it were waiting for something. We didn't think much of it as we meandered back up Pike Street, not really sure what to do in the few hours we had remaining before our departure. Other folks were heading in different directions, walking to blockade points, or just wandering around.

Suddenly, the staccato snapping of a string of firecrackers sounded down Pike Street — about two blocks from us, judging by the volume. A few moments later came a crisp, bowel-bumping **BOOM!** followed quickly by another, louder and deeper than gunshots. Were protesters overturning dumpsters? Had something just been slammed onto the asphalt?

Down the street floated a thin acrid haze that smelled like freshly-ejected shotgun shells. Those weren't dumpsters being tipped over. Acting as one, every person on Pike Street turned toward the sound and started moving. As we marched quickly up Pike, murmurs of "tear gas" bubbled from the crowd around us. A howl of protest roared down the street as we drew closer to the confrontation. The sun was behind a thick cloud cover now, and it was starting to get darker and colder. Why was this happening? What the hell was going on?

About halfway between 5th and 4th, we had to make a snap decision. Ken is legally blind, and it was obvious that we were heading towards an unstable situation in which we could easily become separated. None of us were really sure of our bearings anyway. So, we agreed that Ashley and Ken would "fall back to the Banana Republic" storefront about a block down the street, and I would move ahead, recon, get some footage of whatever was going on, then rendezvous back with them after a few minutes. It was 3:10 p.m.

I made my way up to 4th and Pike, where the confrontation was

## Voices of Dissent

Random quotes from the street during N30:

"Laws such as the Endangered Species and the Clean Water and Air Acts are being trampled by the World Trade Organization without any representation from the People. I'm here to participate in non-violent, peaceful protests to shut this down, so that tomorrow morning and the day after that and the day after that, years and years down the road, our children will know that we did this for the earth, and for love."

—WTO protester

"If you don't go along with their ideas and their goals, they can make you a 'third world' country. It's a policy that we saw America take against Cuba thirty years ago. That was the beginning of a bad idea. This is the culmination. It's putting American workers out of jobs, it's creating labor slavery in other countries — it's just a bad idea all around."

—Demonstrator from Seattle

"After seeing for myself what's happened, and then watching the news accounts, I'd have to say that the media is doing a poor job of getting the truth out, because what they show on TV, and what they say, is not at all the reality in most cases of what's going on. When people are denied their basic civil rights — we are not under a police state — and they don't have the freedom to move around, and they are attacked brutally by law enforcement agencies for just being in an area that they have a right to be in, we have a real problem in this country. This is stuff that we've seen on TV in other countries, but never in the United States to this extent."

—Earl, a steelworker with the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs & the Environment

"I've always wanted to be in a revolution. That's why I'm here. Also, this is it. This is the end of the twentieth century, which has been filled with so much brutality and exploitation in the name of profit — this is our chance, this is our moment to say, 'No! No more, no way, never again!' I mean, they have so much power, but today, we have the power! And we're going to show them that we're not afraid. We're fighting for what's right. We're *not* going to back down. We're going to stand our ground. Because we're right. We're fighting for what's right. They know it, too. We all know it."

—Ecstatic WTO protester relating her views on N30

"It's a hell of an opportunity to show that the problem with the WTO is the same problem that all of the institutions that fill our lives are guilty of. There are people other than ourselves in control of our lives. They just keep getting further and further away from us, and more and more powerful. I don't care whether they're making decisions that I like or that I hate. The fact that they're making those decisions is unhealthy and unnatural. So I'm hoping that we can come out here and get crazy and fuck enough shit up that every city in the world knows that it can't host the WTO conference, and they better give control back to the people of their own lives or that city is going to be torn to pieces."

—Masked anarchist explains his motivations for using property destruction as a form of protest



unfolding. Hundreds of protesters were shouting, "*Non violent protest! Non violent protest!*" A line of green-jacketed King County sheriff's deputies blocked 4th Avenue from wall to wall, bolstered by Seattle riot police and a "Peacekeeper" armored vehicle. I found myself on the other side of Pike Street across from the police line, in the midst of a large group of protesters. A few people were sitting and crouching, throwing up peace signs.

"Get down!" shouted one protester. "Sit down! Sit down!"

From the police line, a dark gray orb lobbed into the air, drooping in a heavy arc over the crowd. About twelve feet above the street, the grenade exploded with a gut-kicking report.

"Fuck you!"

"Pigs!"

"Stay calm!"

"Non violence!"

"Ya fuckin' piiiigs!"

"Everybody down! Down!"

**BLAM!** Another concussion grenade split the air. Gray gunpowder clouds floated overhead. Tear gas billowed from the police position.

"Everybody down! Get down!"

"Get down! Get down! Get down!"

"Non violence! Non violence!"

"Sit down! Sit down! Everybody, sit, sit!"

"Stay down, stay together! Stay down, stay together!"

For a moment, people nervously sat and crouched. "Get down buddy!" yelled a guy next to me, groping for the shirt of the man standing in front of him. Flaming canisters flew over the crowd, clattering to the ground about twenty feet away in hot metal jets of flame and gas, as **BLAM! BLAM BLAM!**

three flash-bang grenades exploded in rapid succession, sending protesters ducking for cover. The vicious intensity of the attack was momentarily overwhelming. A grayish-white cloud spewed from the tear gas canisters. People covered their mouths, wincing, and turned quickly to move down the street away from the gas. A huge cloud of tear gas also billowed from the area in front of the police line. Another concussion grenade lobbed overhead and

**BLAM!**

exploded. Somewhere in the swarming confusion a few protesters rushed to shove a dumpster midway into the intersection, closer to the police line. Another flash-bang grenade

**BLAM!**

sent a bright yellow flash into the crowd. The gas was starting to rake its chemical hooks through my air passages — just a whiff, just a little taste. I joined some of the other protesters making a strategic retreat about thirty feet back. Others, who had wisely brought gas masks, remained in the intersection.

Why in the hell was this happening? It just didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense. This shouldn't be happening. What could have provoked this kind of an attack? Gas everywhere, shouts, desperate questions, confusion, chaos...

Then a strong gust of wind blew down 4th Avenue, sweeping the gas out of the intersection and blowing it straight into the police. Nature's breath had reversed the momentum, allowing us to regain and hold our position. As everyone moved back in, demonstrators started shouting, "*The whole world is watching! The whole world is watching!*"

As the camcorders whirled, the words resonated. The whole world really *was* watching. The police were free to do their worst







**TOP LEFT:** A police officer, standing as typical as riot gear, faces up protesters during the 1999 WTO summit in Seattle. (RIP WTO N30) **MIDDLE LEFT:** A riot cop faces protesters, and a crowd of protesters with an extra-long can of pepper spray. (RIP WTO N30) **BOTTOM LEFT:** A police officer faces a riot cop, and a riot cop faces a riot cop. (RIP WTO N30) **MIDDLE RIGHT:** A riot cop faces a riot cop, and a riot cop faces a riot cop. (RIP WTO N30) **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A riot cop faces a riot cop, and a riot cop faces a riot cop. (RIP WTO N30)

**CENTER:** A woman's body is ready to be hit by a riot cop's baton. (RIP WTO N30) **TOP RIGHT:** A woman's body is ready to be hit by a riot cop's baton. (RIP WTO N30) **MIDDLE RIGHT:** A riot cop faces a riot cop, and a riot cop faces a riot cop. (RIP WTO N30) **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A riot cop faces a riot cop, and a riot cop faces a riot cop. (RIP WTO N30)



# Why We Are Here for the World Trade Organization Ministerial Summit, Seattle, 1999

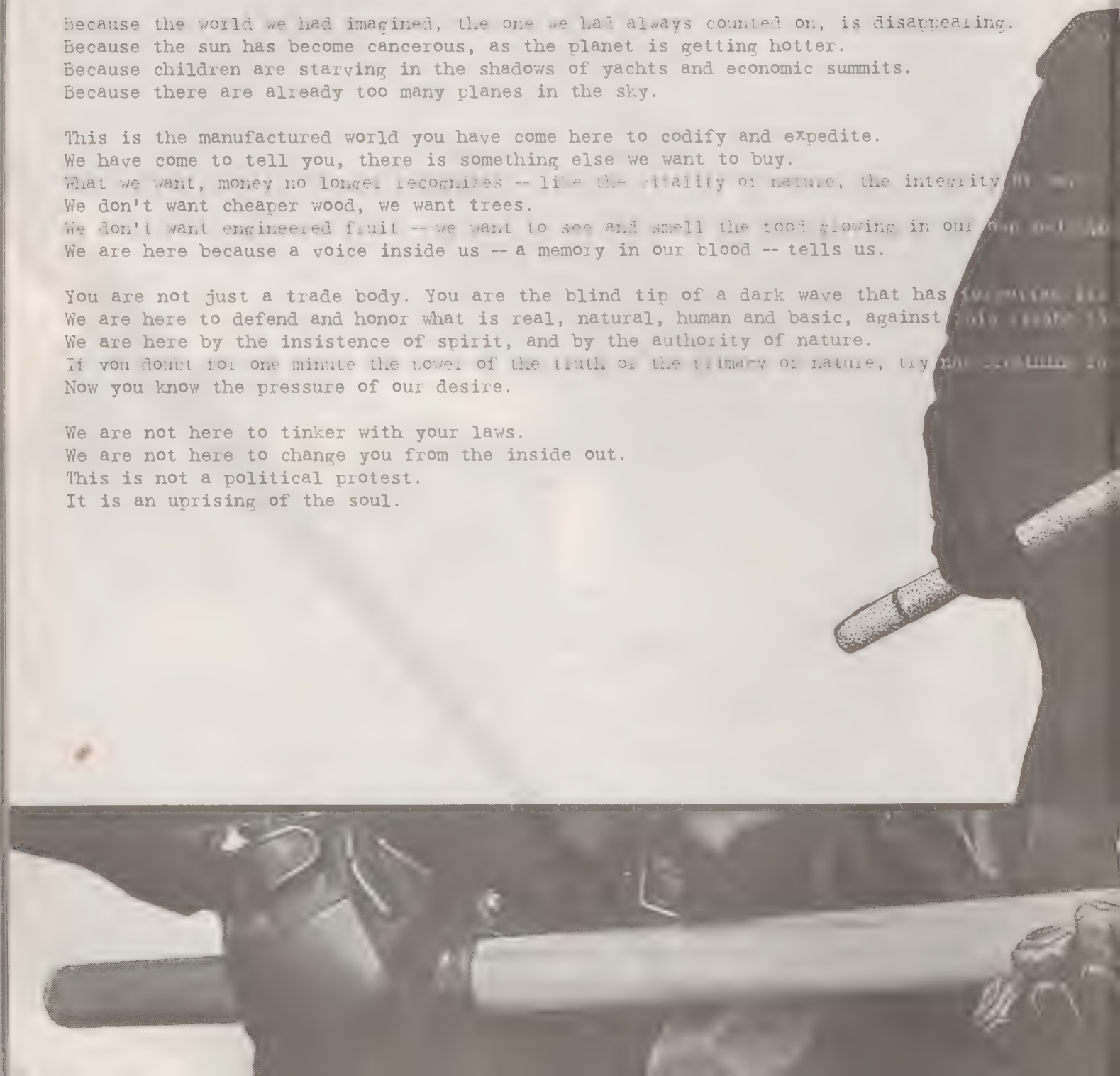
by Ellen Broadcast on Cascadia Alive!, December 1, 1999

Because the world we had imagined, the one we had always counted on, is disappearing.  
Because the sun has become cancerous, as the planet is getting hotter.  
Because children are starving in the shadows of yachts and economic summits.  
Because there are already too many planes in the sky.

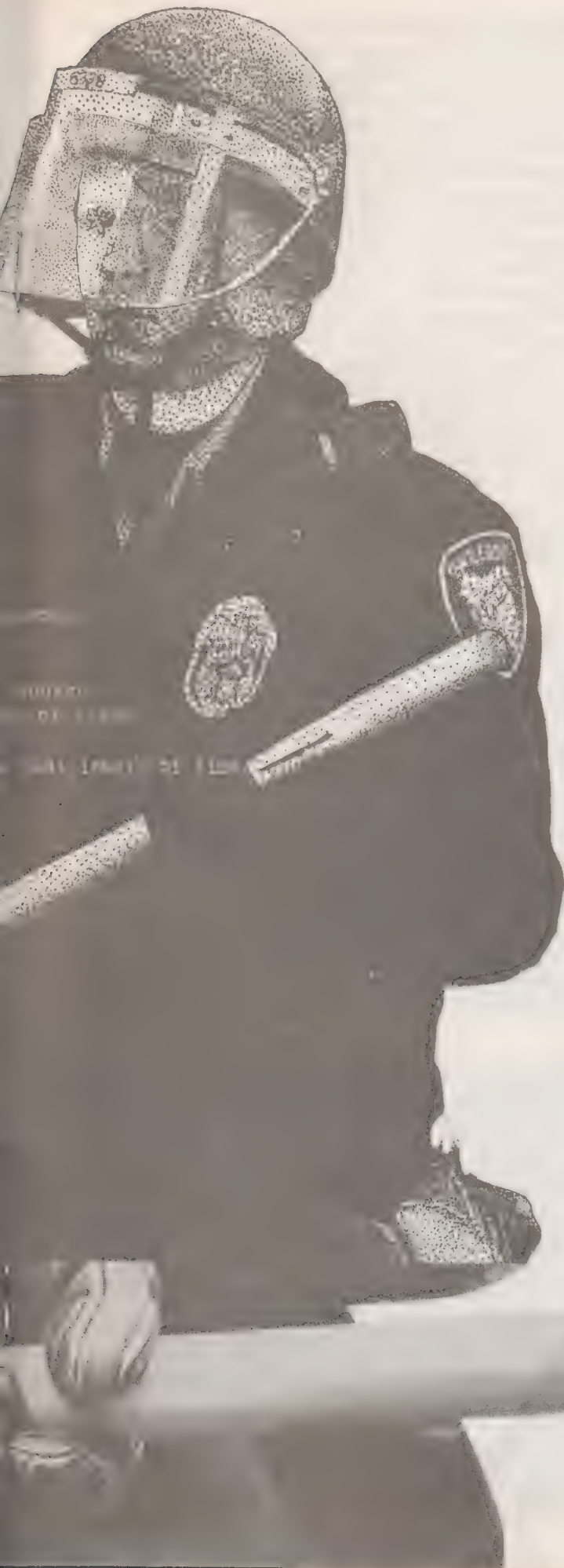
This is the manufactured world you have come here to codify and expedite.  
We have come to tell you, there is something else we want to buy.  
What we want, money no longer recognizes -- like the vitality of nature, the integrity of life.  
We don't want cheaper wood, we want trees.  
We don't want engineered fruit -- we want to see and smell the food growing in our own soil.  
We are here because a voice inside us -- a memory in our blood -- tells us.

You are not just a trade body. You are the blind tip of a dark wave that has threatened life.  
We are here to defend and honor what is real, natural, human and basic, against the forces of greed.  
We are here by the insistence of spirit, and by the authority of nature.  
If you doubt for one minute the power of the truth or the primacy of nature, try not to think to yourself.  
Now you know the pressure of our desire.

We are not here to tinker with your laws.  
We are not here to change you from the inside out.  
This is not a political protest.  
It is an uprising of the soul.







here on the streets, but it would all be recorded by hundreds of amateur videographers watching every move, documenting it for tens of thousands of friends and cable access viewers back in our home towns. And even as we filmed the police bombardment, word was already pouring onto the Internet of what was going on, spreading from there to millions of people around the globe.

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING!"

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING!"

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING!"

I was yelling so hard I couldn't hold a steady shot with the camera. People were swarming in all directions, covering their faces, trying not to breath the gas.

**BLAM!**

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING!"

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING!"

**BLAM!**

Gray wraiths of tear gas wafted everywhere as I moved in to get some clearer footage. My sinuses felt thick, my eyes were running, there was fire in my lungs. Not at all pleasant, but not at all unbearable. I was just having a hard time getting used to the idea that the police were wantonly torturing people right there in the streets with chemical weapons. The whole thing just blew my mind. The wind kept changing directions as it swirled between the buildings, but luckily it continued to blow most of the gas back toward the police.

Somewhere in the crowd, a protester managed to pick up and throw back a tear gas canister, plunking it at the feet of the riot cops. A jet of thick gas billowed up and engulfed them, causing a moment of confusion on the police line. The police retaliated with

**BLAM!**

another concussion grenade, and more tear gas. I fell back momentarily to dodge a gas cloud. The crowd was now roaring in one voice,

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING!"

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING!"

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING!"

Another **BLAM!**

concussion grenade exploded. An activist with a bullhorn encouraged a new chant,

"NON-VIOLENT PROTEST!"

"NON-VIOLENT PROTEST!"

which was quickly picked up by the crowd. A protester chucked a piece of dumpster trash at the police. Demonstrators were trying to rally around the dumpster in the center of the intersection, some standing on top, others pacing in front holding up peace signs.

I moved in closer, about fifteen feet from the police line, choking on gas. Someone had dunked a tear gas canister into a dumpster to stifle its effects. People were pounding and stomping on the





**TOP:** Rubber bullets are designed to simulate a gunshot without penetrating skin. However, a hard hit is painfully felt. For this reason, police use tear gas instead of rubber bullets. (Photo by Kurt Jensen)

**MIDDLE:** Tear gas billows from the police line at 4th & Pike after a protester throws a gas canister.

**BOTTOM:** Protesters hold their ground at 4th & Pike after taking heavy fire from the police.

dumpsters for a drumbeat, screaming at the police, howling in outrage. The King County deputies braced themselves, feet spread apart, plexiglas shields leaning toward the crowd. A few protesters slung smoking missiles from the dumpster into the police line. The flaming gas canister had ignited the trash, and orange flames now blazed out, adding another thick cloud of choking smoke to the chaos.

More tear gas canisters clattered to the pavement, spreading a toxic chemical fog over the intersection. People who were closer to the police started bugging out, fast. About five seconds later, I found out why. I didn't even see it — the gas just hit me like a brickbat. It was all around me, inside me, yanking my nervous system from brain to toe. Involuntarily, my body just turned and ran down the street. My mind had no say in the matter. I rested the camera on my shoulder, shooting random footage as I retreated. A cloud of gas swept down the sidewalk as another concussion grenade exploded over the crowd.

"Yeah! We threw one back!" yelled a protester in a gray gas mask.

My eyes were watering gushers now, blurring my vision. A hot nail of pain sat in my stomach. I made it about a block down the street before I could no longer see. My face, wet with eye water, felt sunburned. I groped around in my knapsack and after a few hour-long seconds retrieved a squirt bottle of water. Blocking my hairline, I flushed my whole face with fresh water. I was rewarded by a river of pain flowing through my eyes.

Folks, don't be a dumbass like me. If you ever get teargassed, don't squirt your whole head off, because all of the tear gas particles that are stuck to your hair and forehead and eyebrows will get washed straight into your eyes. Instead, grab a towel or piece of clothing that was not directly exposed to the gas, use it to block everything above your eyeballs, and flush out your open eyes with water. Then use the clean part of the towel to wipe your eyes. Flush again if necessary. This will quickly reduce the corneal effects of tear gas exposure from blinding to mildly irritating. To make an expedient gas mask, try soaking a bandana in vinegar. You can store it in a heavy-duty Ziploc baggie and whip it out if necessary. A good long soak in an epsom salt bath is recommended to extract gas poisons absorbed by the skin. (Even the rubber straps of a gas mask will start to absorb tear gas chemicals after a while, causing skin irritation.) One last tip: prolonged or heavy exposure to tear gas can cause liver damage equivalent to 5-10 years' worth of heavy drinking. Grapefruit and dandelion juice are recommended for cleansing the liver. And now, back to our story...

Eventually I managed to flush out my eyes, and the peppery chemical pain soon subsided. My vision was still wasted. Behind me, I heard a voice say, "Hey, aren't you from our group?"

I turned to see a blurry form — her voice sounded familiar, but I couldn't see who it was. "I don't know... maybe!" I said, blinking hard, trying to clear my eyesight.

"Yeah, you are, hey," she said.

My vision cleared somewhat. Sure enough, it was Hava, one of the women from our van. She was with a couple of other people from our affinity group. "Hey, what's happenin'?" I said. "You haven't seen Ashley or Ken, have you? I've been trying to find them, I couldn't see though..."

"No, we haven't seen them."

"They're supposed to be around here somewhere..." I looked around. Hundreds of people were milling about. It was impossible to see. "They were firing a lot of tear gas up the street, concussion grenades..."

"Yeah, they've been firing rubber bullets, too," Hava said. "They're all over the street. People are walking around picking them up. They're all over the place. I found one..."



"I gotta see this," I said. She reached into her vest pocket and pulled out a black rubber ball about the size of an acorn. "So they were firing those at people, huh?"

"Yeah."

"Damn." I wiped my eyes again. By now my vision had mostly returned. "Listen, I'm going to run up and look for Ashley and Ken, are you guys going to be around here for a few minutes?"

"Yeah, we'll be around here."

"Cool, I'll be back in a sec."

I jogged back towards 4th and Pike and was relieved to find them about half a block up the street. They had caught some of the gas too. We walked back and joined the others for a quick debriefing. Apparently, skirmishes like this were taking place all around the convention center. Bloodied protesters had been seen at various locations, wounded by rubber bullets and police batons. It was shortly before 4:00, and a cold, cloudy dusk was closing in fast.

I stood on an overturned newspaper box, trying to get some footage of 4th and Pike, but we were too far away. "I'm going to run up for a few minutes and see what's going on," I said. "I'll be right back."

As I walked up, a street medic helped a woman wash tear gas from her eyes. A young man who had been heavily gassed leaned against a lamppost and vomited. The dumpster fire burned on, raising a plastic snow of ashes and foul toxic smoke.

When the police attack began, demonstrators had quickly flooded into the area, among them many protesters from the union march. At the intersection of 4th and Pike, people filled the streets in three directions, as the police tensely held their line, immobile. The intersection itself was filled from edge to edge with human bodies, a mass of people now unmovable. The police weren't firing any more tear gas or grenades. They just stood like nervous stone as the crowd pressed in, just out of baton's reach.

"I was over there about a half hour before this started, and it was like 25 people deep, all the way across, and they were yelling and stuff, but nobody was rioting or anything," one protester said to another as I stood on a lamppost fixture, trying to shoot some clearer footage of the scene.

Somewhere in the crowd, the basso brass blurring of a tuba lifted the scene to yet another level of surreality. On the far side of the intersection, a knot of demonstrators had gathered on top of a

dumpster, fists raised in defiance, rallying around a tall vertical "RESIST" flag that rippled in the cold wind.

An activist with a bullhorn urged, "Remain calm. Do not retaliate. Do not retaliate. Let's make an example we can be remembered with. This is a non-violent protest. A non-violent protest. Peace *always* prevails."

I stopped filming and took one last look around with my human eyes. Something had been born here, or unleashed. This was not just a protest. This was our Boston Tea Party.

Of course the protesters wouldn't be able to hold the area forever. Sooner or later, enough police would be brought in to drive them back. But for that day, N30, the People were in control. There was no mediation. There was no compromise. We did what we came to do, and we succeeded. The rabid tone of the police response stands as a testament — absurd and extraneous, but noteworthy. Repression and state violence always escalate as the state's authority deteriorates. In Seattle, the iron fist had slipped out of the velvet glove.

I met back with the others from our group, and around 4:30 we decided to egress. We were expected at the rendezvous point before 5:30, and we had a long walk ahead of us. As we rounded the corner back down 5th Avenue, a small group of anarchists furiously spray-painted the side of a bus, raising a gray cloud of aerosol paint particles. Intricate spider webs of fractured glass spread through corporate storefronts all down the street — Banana Republic, the Warner Bros. branded media product outlet, and on and on and on. All of these windows had been fully intact earlier in the day, before the police opened fire.

We paused for a minute outside the locked doors of a hotel lobby to watch some live footage from downtown. It was really getting dark now. The crowd swirled in the streetlights, a scene of chaos. Things weren't going to be pretty that night.

An hour later, as we cruised south on Interstate 5, the flashing blue lights of State Police vehicles slashed north toward Seattle. We sat in the van's dark cabin listening to radio reports. Hundreds of Washington National Guard troops had been mobilized and were being deployed at once. The mayor had declared a 50-block "no protest" zone around the convention center, suspending the Constitutional rights of protesters and Seattle's citizens. A dusk-to-dawn curfew had been imposed, and a huge swath of the city's center was now under martial law.



President Clinton opens the delayed summit by addressing a sparse gathering of delegates.





#### this page:

**TOP:** One of the rubber bullets that littered the streets of downtown Seattle.

**MIDDLE:** TV news vans were a choice target of the spray paint brigade. (RIP WTO N30)

**BOTTOM:** A flag of resistance flaps in the wind at 4th & Pike, as protesters rally on top of a dumpster in front of the police line.

#### opposite page:

**TOP:** An injured protester describes being beaten by the police. The gash over her eye would ordinarily require stitches, but she didn't have health insurance to cover it. (RIP WTO N30)

**SECOND FROM TOP:** This woman locked herself down at 6th & Pike with a bicycle U-Lock around her neck. (Photo by Kurt Jensen)

**SECOND FROM BOTTOM:** A protester displays a spent grenade shell. (Labor Beat)

**BOTTOM:** National Guard troops patrol the "Zone" on Monday, Dec. 1.

## In the days that followed, protests and marches

continued in Seattle, despite the declaration of martial law. The National Guard had deployed downtown, and hundreds of people had been arrested. Mayor Paul Schell had issued an executive order banning gas masks for the duration of the WTO Ministerial meeting. With the stroke of a pen, passive self-defense against police chemical weapons attacks became an arrestable offense. Street medics were ordered to remove their gas masks or face incarceration.

As police continued to shoot, beat and gas people in the streets of downtown Seattle, President Clinton led the delayed opening of the WTO summit with an address to the trade ministers who had managed to cross the People's blockade and enter the building. His remarks were typically out of touch with reality: "I condemn the small number who were violent, and who tried to prevent you from meeting, but I'm glad the others showed up."

Of course, the whole N30 mobilization had a singular objective: to shut down the WTO summit. Any "others" who were there were either holiday shoppers, cops, or people on their way to work. The citizens of the United States, and the people of other nations, have no democratic access to the World Trade Organization. Our governments' representatives to the WTO are not elected. The WTO operates in secrecy, and dictates its rulings absolutely. Since we have no way of influencing the WTO from within, we had no choice but to lay siege to it. This direct action brought a vast range of activists together and forged a new coalition that wound their diverse political threads into one movement — an echo of the *coyuntura* of the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas.

When the WTO and the City of Seattle used violence to force an opening to the summit, they further radicalized tens of thousands of activists and cemented the bonds of this new movement. Each canister of tear gas blew another hole in the legitimacy of the state apparatus. They used guns, grenades and chemical weapons to brutalize non-violent protesters exercising their Constitutionally guaranteed civil rights, in order to allow a hopelessly corrupt trade organization to meet in secrecy and plan the next three years of global economic domination. The raw truth of the matter was plainly evident.

To avoid discussing this raw truth, the media chose to focus on marginal acts of vandalism. At a press conference Tuesday afternoon, after the WTO summit had disintegrated into a total fiasco for its host city, former Seattle police chief Norm Stamper\* declared that "anarchists from Eugene, Oregon" were "claiming responsibility" for pretty much everything that had gone bad. (It just so happens that the Eugene Police Department was involved in training and debriefing the Seattle police in preparation for N30.) Stamper's classic propaganda maneuver allowed the police to hedge criticisms about rampant human rights abuses, refocusing media attention instead on the "anarchist menace."

Within hours, wide-eyed, breathless NBC reporters in search of anarchists burst into Out of the Fog, an organic coffee house frequented by Eugene activists. Tuesday night, on *NBC Nightly News*, Tom Brokaw warned the nation that "anarchy was their motto and their goal," while NBC reporter Kelly O'Donnell claimed that their strategy was "open advocacy of violence." Naturally, violence was equated with property destruction, and vice-versa. But of course, the unbiased professional journalist reported, "Seattle police can't say for sure the Oregon group is responsible for *all* of the violence and vandalism," but that "arrest records will help identify troublemakers."

\*Stamper resigned from the Seattle Police Department a few days later, claiming that he had been planning to retire for some time.



The NBC *Nightly News* report identified anarchist intellectual John Zerzan as "their leader," which is utterly absurd by definition. Zerzan's work has been highly influential among the anarchist community, but he is by no means the "anarchist leader," whatever that would be.

It's just madness: violence against non-violent protesters, justified by marginal acts of property destruction — much of which was provoked by police initiation of violence. It cuts straight to the heart of the Big Issue: in an autocratic corporate police state, property — the fixation of capital — is considered to be more valuable than human beings. Thus, the prevention of property destruction can be used as a cover story for politically-motivated beatings, bombings, chemical weapons assaults and rubber bullet attacks. As always, the mainstream media gleefully carried the message and embellished it wholeheartedly. Stay tuned for the made-for-TV movie, brought to you by Department of Justice Productions.

If nothing else, mainstream news coverage showed the nation that our police forces have no qualms about violently assaulting their fellow citizens. Footage of riot cops hosing non-violent protesters with fire extinguisher-sized cans of pepper spray bore a dim memory of the days of Jim Crow, when police used fire hoses to brutalize civil rights protesters. To those who were paying attention, the news footage of WTO Seattle must have seemed quite shocking.

Otherwise, the mainstream news coverage was just appalling. Luckily for us in Eugene, we have *Cascadia Alive!*, one of the best cable access shows in the country, to help represent the underdog's view of things. Wednesday night, *Cascadia Alive!* featured a live telephone report from deep in the "Zone," where an activist named Mick and his buddy Earl, a steelworker, were holed up inside a church to avoid police detection.

"I think we threw the Constitution out a long time ago," Mick said, "but certainly whatever was left was thrown into the shredder two days ago. There are no Constitutional rights here. Freedom of speech, of expression or assembly have been pretty much suspended altogether — whatever was left of them."

"I didn't think that we'd stop the WTO," said Earl. "But what we really needed to do was to show the world, and the citizens of the United States, that we have a problem with WTO, that it is not good for people, it's not good for the environment. And we've done that. But we've also seen an abusive power by law enforcement agencies that have no regard for our basic civil rights."

In spite of the adversity, Mick said, the protesters were not giving up. "Every time another canister goes off, they move someplace else and continue the resistance and continue to get it recorded and thrown back in the public's face that the WTO is a screwed up deal for all of us. I don't think it really matters to them how many times they get gassed, they keep going back."

Protests continued through the day and night of December 1, with many Seattle residents turning out to join the protests. A particularly intense battle was fought in the Capitol Hill area. In footage broadcast on *Cascadia Alive!*, roaming riot police confronted demonstrators in the Capitol Hill area, as one protester yelled,

"This is our neighborhood! Get out of here!"

"Go home! Go home! Go home!"

"Go home! We don't want you here!"

**BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!**

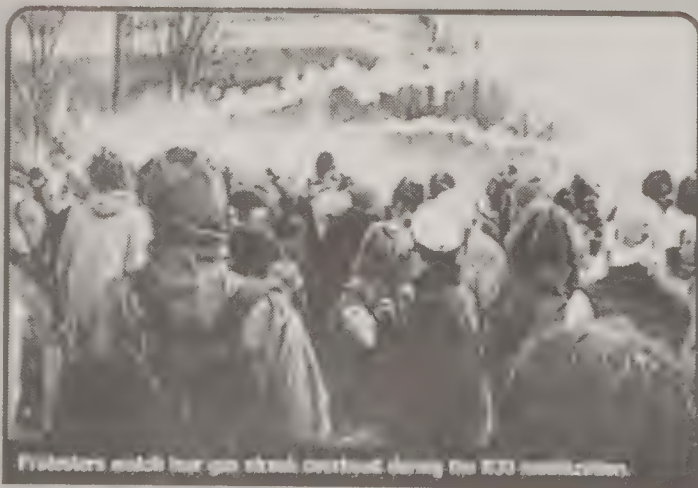
Multiple flash-bangs set off car alarms up and down the street.

"Fuck you!" one of the protesters screamed. "This is *my fuckin'* neighborhood! *My fuckin'* neighborhood! Fuck you assholes!"

Tear gas canisters sent them running for air.







## Chemical Agents

**INCREDIBLY, THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT INITIALLY DENIED HAVING USED** chemical weapons on democracy protesters during N30. Within hours, however, adequate evidence had been amassed to prove beyond any doubt that they were lying. In several cases, radio and TV journalists were tear gassed as they broadcast live from the scene, coughing and vomiting as they tried to report what was going on. Police have admitted to using three "crowd control chemicals" during the WTO Seattle protests: OC gas (red pepper spray), Pyrotechnic CS agent (the same stuff the FBI used on the Branch Davidians), and Liquid Agent CN. The CN gas contained a highly toxic solvent, methylene chloride, which can cause the equivalent of 5-10 years' worth of heavy drinking damage to the liver, heart palpitations, skin lesions and a wide range of other symptoms (see below). The following information was released in March by the Washington Toxics Coalition office in Seattle.

The Washington Toxics Coalition recently requested and received Material Safety Data Sheets from the Seattle Police Department for all chemicals used in crowd control during WTO protests the week of November 29.

The Department reported the use of an OC gas (active ingredient is oleoresin of capsicum), Pyrotechnic CS agent (o-chlorobenzalmalononitrile) and Liquid Agent CN (chloroacetophenone).

One disturbing find was the solvent used in the CN agent. The MSDS indicated that the agent is 50% active ingredient and 50% methylene chloride as a solvent. Methylene chloride is a possible/anticipated carcinogen as reported by the National Toxicology Program and the International Agency for Research on Cancer. The National Library of Medicine's Toxnet web-site reports it to be an experimental carcinogen, tumorigen, teratogen (causes birth defects when it reaches egg or sperm cells of the parents, or the developing fetus) with experimental reproductive effects. The site also indicates that human mutagen (causes mutations in cells) data exists.

In addition to these serious effects, central nervous system depression is reported. Many of the nervous system effects given on the Toxnet site are similar to those experienced by protesters. Some of the symptoms listed by Toxnet are lethargy, mental confusion, headache, tingling of the limbs, acoustical and optical delusions, liver and kidney damage, increased risk of spontaneous abortion, coma, and death.

Another dangerous effect of methylene chloride is described in Cassell's Clinical Toxicology of Commercial Products. The compound is metabolized to carbon monoxide in humans, which could be dangerous to persons with asthma or cardiovascular problems.

In short, methylene chloride is a dangerous solvent suspected of causing cancer, tumor growth, birth defects, reproductive system effects, cell mutations and central nervous system depression.

from the  
**Methylene Chloride Material Safety Data Sheet**  
<http://ehs.clemson.edu/msds/Methyl.html>

**EFFECTS OF OVEREXPOSURE:** Inhalation and ingestion are harmful and may be fatal. Inhalation may cause headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, narcosis, suffocation, lower blood pressure, central nervous system depression. Inhalation of vapors may cause severe irritation of the respiratory system. Liquid may be irritating to skin and eyes. Prolonged skin contact may result in dermatitis. Eye contact may result in temporary corneal damage. Ingestion may cause nausea, vomiting, gastrointestinal irritation, and burns to mouth and throat.

**TARGET ORGANS:** Skin, cardiovascular system, central nervous system, eyes.

And so it went, another night of touch-and-go skirmishes. As the street party raged on through the night of December 1, the People held Capitol Hill. However, during the day, the police had taken more than 500 prisoners. On Wednesday morning, the Steelworkers and Longshoremen held a rally at the Seattle docks, then marched directly into the restricted zone. Police immediately charged with the "Peacekeeper" armored vehicle, chucking tear gas and grenades and hosing protesters with pepper spray. The force of the assault drove the demonstrators north, into an area around 1st Avenue & Denny Street which was surrounded by cops. The police then closed in and carried out a mass arrest. Elsewhere, protesters sitting in a large circle were pepper sprayed on national television.

The police arranged to transport the massive influx of prisoners to jail using city buses. That turned out to be a tactical error. After brutalizing and unjustifiably arresting all these people for exercising their civil rights, the cops foolishly put 150 of them in an enclosed area where they could only be contained, not controlled. The prisoners immediately took control of the buses and held them from 10 a.m. until late in the night. The next day, thousands of demonstrators marched to the jail to support the WTO prisoners, who now numbered 600. More than a thousand people camped outside the jail, shouting "This is what democracy looks like!" Inside the jail, the police were interrogating their prisoners — strapping them to chairs and beating them in some cases, leaning heavily with threats and psychological coercion.

Suppression of dissent did not occur only within the 52-block restricted area. In one reported incident, police seized brochures from protesters on the street outside the "Zone," saying that the brochures were "a form of protest." Police also seized copies of the First Amendment from a demonstrator who had duplicated it at the local Kinko's. The reason, once again: "It was a form of protest."

In spite of police violence, repression and terror tactics, the N30 mobilization was a certified success. Its primary objective had been accomplished: protesters had shut the WTO summit down. Only 200 of the summit's 8,000 attendees made it to the meeting on November 30. In large part, demonstrators blocked the summit with the mere presence of their bodies. A more direct tactic of civil disobedience was to surround WTO delegates and scream "GO HOME!!!" in their ears as loudly and angrily as possible, until they just gave up and retreated. The psychological pressure of this non-violent tactic worked with remarkable effect.

Some of the WTO delegates reportedly expressed their fears that the impassioned protesters would rise up and kill them all. Acting on his fear instinct, one delegate pulled a gun on a group of protesters. Another delegate throttled a demonstrator while trying to break through the protest line. Yet another delegate foolishly leaped over a line of protesters and was quickly clubbed by police until he waved his credentials in terrified agony.

Of course, most of the police violence was reserved for the protesters. Head shots with rubber bullets are potentially lethal. That's why police shotguns loaded with rubber bullet shells were marked "LESS LETHAL." No one was killed during the WTO protests, but several protesters had front teeth knocked out, and one person reportedly had part of his jaw blown off by a rubber bullet. A standard police tactic was to douse an area in tear gas, then open fire with rubber bullets while everyone was blinded and disoriented. Many protesters sitting passively in lock-downs were severely bruised by plastic and rubber bullets fired at point-blank range.

The police fired so much tear gas that by 6:00 p.m. on



November 30, they had completely depleted their on-hand supply. At some points, there were so many plainclothes officers in the crowd that the police were hesitant to use tear gas — but that was the only time they hesitated. Protesters who were locked down suffered terribly. Many female protesters who had been gassed experienced immediate onset of menstruation. Not realizing that CN gas exposure could trigger spontaneous abortion, a pregnant woman suffered a miscarriage.

The Seattle Police Department reported the use of three chemical warfare agents against WTO protesters: OC gas (red pepper spray), Pyrotechnic CS agent (the same stuff the FBI used on the Branch Davidians), and Liquid Agent CN. According to its Material Safety Data Sheet, the CN agent contains 50% active ingredient and 50% methylene chloride, a highly toxic solvent used by medical researchers as an experimental carcinogen. Methylene chloride can cause birth defects, human cell mutations, cancerous tumors, central nervous system depression, liver and kidney damage, narcosis, mental confusion, acoustical and optical hallucinations, nausea, gastrointestinal irritation, skin irritation and dermatitis, corneal damage, burns to the mouth and throat, coma and death. It targets the skin, cardiovascular system, central nervous system and eyes. For extra fun, it metabolizes carbon monoxide inside the human body. (See sidebar.)

The Seattle police haven't admitted to it, but they are also suspected of having used "non-lethal" nerve gas on protesters. At a Seattle City Council hearing held a few days after the WTO protests had ended, two dozen people expressed their concerns about an unidentified chemical agent used by police at Pike Place Market. Unlike the tear gas and pepper spray, this gas didn't irritate or burn. However, protesters experienced instantaneous onset of other strange symptoms, including pupil dilation, rapid heart rate, high blood pressure, severe prolonged diarrhea, muscular twitches, abrupt loss of muscle strength, unconsciousness and spasms.

UCLA Medical School psychiatrist and forest activist Dr. Kirk Murphy, who provided medical assistance to protesters, believes that these symptoms indicate the possible use of neuro-toxic agents developed by the military for crowd control purposes. "The single most compelling explanation for the observed findings," Murphy wrote in a widely-distributed email, "is the (deliberate or accidental) inclusion of 'incapacitating agents' which disrupt neural function in the chemical munitions discharged by law enforcement agencies in Seattle during the WTO protest." It just so happens that an Army Biological and Chemical Warfare Emergency Response team was in town for N30, purportedly on the scene as a precautionary measure against "terrorists." While the Seattle police have been continuously lambasted from all directions, the role of Federal agencies at WTO Seattle has been all but ignored.

**The superheated political experience of N30 left me** eager to take action. I had a lot of footage, so I started pulling video stills for ParaScope readers to view online. Some of these stills were reprinted in the *Eugene Weekly*, an alternative local newsweekly where I work as a graphic designer. My next impetus was a hastily-produced documentary called *WTO Seattle: N30*. About ten days after N30, Kevin, my boss at the *Eugene Weekly*, invited me to his house to screen *WTO Seattle: N30* for some friends of his — Sterling and Ruth — who had participated in the

# Enemies of the State

The following "Terrorist Threat Advisory" was distributed by the FBI's Awareness of National Security Issues and Response (ANSIR), service prior to the WTO summit.

## ANSIR Email — Threat to World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Meeting in Seattle, Washington, 11/29/99 through 12/3/99.

National Security Division, Washington, D.C.

The following message is an FBI Terrorist Threat Advisory for the Domestic United States only. This advisory will remain in effect for the duration of the WTO Meeting at which time it will expire automatically unless extended by the FBI.

This Awareness of National Security Issues and Response (ANSIR) communication is intended for corporate security professionals and others who have requested to receive unclassified national security threat information from the FBI. This communication is not a press release and may not be republished in any public format without specific authorization from the National ANSIR Program manager at FBIHQ. You may forward this advisory to those in your association, company, or other colleagues in the security profession as deemed appropriate. Media requests should be directed to the WTO media representative, Special Agent Susan Lloyd.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is holding a ministerial meeting in Seattle, Washington from November 29, 1999 through December 3, 1999. The meeting will be attended by approximately 8,000 people, including delegates from 135 member nations, individuals from non-member observer nations, representatives of corporate sponsors, and the press.

Many groups in opposition to the WTO have stated that they will be present in Seattle during the WTO Conference and plan to hold a number of activities including seminars, teach-ins, parades, and street protests.

The FBI has received credible information that some elements within the protest community are planning to disrupt the conference. The FBI assesses the potential threat of violence, to include criminal acts of civil disturbance, as low to medium for the Seattle area during the time frame of the WTO Meeting. In particular, environmental or animal rights extremists or anarchist-induced violence should be considered a possibility during the meeting.

There are also strong indications that computer-based attacks on WTO-related web sites, as well as key corporate and financial sites, will take place to coincide with the opening of the WTO meeting. Cyber-protests are likely to generate Denial of Service attacks, disruptions or alterations of web pages, and "virtual sit-ins."

Corporate sponsors of the WTO may be subject to surveillance efforts from these groups. The purpose of the surveillance is to identify the residences of key employees of sponsoring corporations. At this time the FBI has no specific information regarding which corporations or individuals may be selected for surveillance.

Security officers of corporate sponsors and companies attending the conference are advised to brief the appropriate employees that they may be selected for surveillance prior to, and during the conference. These employees should remain alert for individuals who may be targeting them in furtherance of anti-WTO activities.

If vehicle surveillance is detected, individuals should take no direct action and drive to the nearest police station. Individuals believing they may have been targets of surveillance activities should contact the FBI office ANSIR Coordinator at the number listed below. Activities requiring immediate law enforcement response should be directed to the appropriate local authorities.

Recipients should remain sensitive to threats made by anti-WTO groups. In recent years, protest activity has occurred in New York City and other American cities in conjunction with high profile international conferences taking place outside the United States.

**SOURCE:** 2600: The Hacker Quarterly (<http://www.2600.org>)

**FBI ANSIR Web Page:**

<http://www.fbi.gov/programs/ansir/ansir.ntm>





mobilization. I'd met Sterling at an Alliance for Democracy meeting about two weeks before N30. It was a great pleasure to sit down and swap stories with them that night.

"I mean, can you believe it?" Sterling said. "How many times have you ever seen 50,000 hippies get together in one place at one time for something like that? It was incredible!"

Sterling and Ruth had gone up to Seattle about a week before November 30, as part of the Eugene Alliance for Democracy contingent. They had been privy to a lot more of the logistics and planning than we had seen from our brief and limited participation. They had spent some time in the empty warehouse at 420 Denny, the "hive" where thousands of activists gathered to plan their actions.

For logistical purposes, activists conceptualized the convention center area as a "pie" and divided the area into 13 "wedges." Different clusters of activists were assigned to different wedges of the pie; for example, clusters from Olympia, Washington, and Eugene, Oregon, were assigned to the wedge at 6th and Pike. Each cluster was made up of different affinity groups — small groups of activists who had interpersonal relationships and who completely trusted each other. Specific plans for dealing with arrests and other contingencies were formulated within the affinity groups. People were free to either participate in organized protests, or secretly engage in their own independent activities.

"The best thing about it was this consensus process," Sterling said. "It was great! DAN [the Direct Action Network] showed us how to do it, and it really *worked*." The consensus process is a form of interactive democracy which allows all participants to have direct access to the decision-making process. If anyone had an idea, they could propose it to their affinity group. After gaining the affinity group's consensus, the proposal was then delivered by the group's chosen representative to the spokescouncil, a decisionmaking body made up of representatives from all participating affinity groups. The proposal was then taken back to the individual affinity groups for approval, and their decisions were in turn relayed back to the spokescouncil, which then facilitated the consensus decision. In this way, detailed plans for mass action were formulated with incredible swiftness — with direct and equal democratic participation by everyone involved.

In the rainy early morning hours of N30, Sterling, Ruth and the Eugene Alliance for Democracy contingent deployed at Victor Steinbruck Park, the launch site for a parade organized by Art & Revolution. Trying to attract as little attention as possible, they unloaded a "Trojan Horse" — a wheeled float disguising a heavy lock-down apparatus bound for 6th and Pike. At one point, the police tried to stop them, questioning them about their intentions and pulling up the sides of the float to peer at the cross-barred lockdown box underneath. Exuding grace under pressure, the AfD group pulled a "these-are-not-the-droids-you're-looking-for" move and convinced the police to let them pass. There were only a few cops in the park at that point, and a *lot* of protesters. Outnumbered in the rain and the dark, and dealing with an extremely unconventional situation, the police were off their guard.

The parade formed up, launched from Victor Steinbruck Park, and marched to the downtown area around the convention center. At that point, the parade separated into thirteen groups which marched to the thirteen "pie sections," initiating the blockade of the WTO summit. Right under the noses of the riot police, the Eugene group snaked their way into the intersection of 6th and Pike, diverting attention with a funky hippie dance. When they reached the center of the intersection, *WHOOMP!* they dropped the "Trojan Horse" on the street. Before the cops even realized what was happening, a dozen activists from their cluster had

locked themselves down. One woman attached herself by the neck with a bicycle U-Lock. They had already agreed to risk arrest as part of the blockade. Considering the volatile circumstances, they were risking their physical safety as well. The folks who weren't locked down took support positions around them. Their cluster group formed the core of the blockade point at 6th and Pike, in front of the Sheraton Hotel. Later that afternoon, their lock-down box served as the impromptu stage for the Art & Revolution dancers.

When we were done swapping N30 stories, the conversation naturally turned toward the future. What next? We were all fired up to get seriously involved in the resistance, to really get active and build on what happened in Seattle.

The next morning, Sterling, Kevin and I rode out to Fall Creek, about 40 minutes southeast of Eugene, to deliver a "SAVE OUR FORESTS" banner to the Red Cloud Thunder tree-sit. We found nearly two dozen protesters who were living for weeks at a time on small covered perches 150-200 feet up in the trees, freezing their asses off as the old-growth trees they were protecting swayed up to 30 feet back and forth in the wet winter wind. Their lonely but peaceful vigil helped prevent the unnatural destruction of an ancient forest whose trees sprouted from seed before the New World had been colonized by Europeans.

Our anonymous guide, who met us at the Red Cloud Thunder base camp, showed us all around their encampment, which they had nicknamed "EWOK VILLAGE." At the far end of the tree sit, a solitary woman sick from dysentery called down to us for fresh water, her voice vanishing in gusts of rain and wind. We just happened to have a bottle with us, which we gladly donated. "It's city water!" our guide yelled optimistically as he sent the bottle up in a knapsack hanging from a rope.

Seeing firsthand the need for resources at the Fall Creek tree sit, we immediately vowed to organize a supply effort. That week, we secured a sizable food donation from a local organic grocery store, as well as some various other items, which were dropped at a donation site. We were able to make a smaller supply run a few weeks later, and more are planned for the future. Our contribution was just one small drop in a big bucket, but it felt good to take an active role and actually do something.

We weren't the only ones stirred by the Seattle mobilization. Since N30, the town has buzzed with activity. Eugene has been visited in recent months by authors, researchers and activists such as Ward Churchill, David Korten, Frances Fox Piven, Black Panthers leader Bobby Seale, Alliance for Democracy founder Ronnie Dugger, and media critic Norman Solomon (see page 30). The Eugene chapter of Alliance for Democracy has been working hard to develop a sort of "globalization follies" road show, focusing on the WTO Seattle protests. This spring, the AfD road show will help spread the word about the devastating effects of transnational globalization. We've heard of other groups across the nation undertaking similar projects, carrying the lessons of Seattle into communities all across the countryside.

Meanwhile, Eugene's anarchists continue fighting the good fight, in preparation for the planned seven weeks of resistance to be launched on May Day 2000. To keep themselves busy in the meantime, some of the anarchists have devoted themselves to a new campaign, called E.A.T., or "Eugene Anarchists for Torrey," to help incumbent mayor Jim Torrey keep his job. Torrey, a big buddy-buddy of the corporate business network, faces virtually no electoral opposition from the progressive community in Eugene. Since they couldn't beat him, the anarchists figured their best option was to support Torrey in hopes that his re-election will help speed up the



inevitable revolution. On December 17, E.A.T. held a press conference on the steps of City Hall, attended by about 50 people and two dozen police officers. Frowning cross-armed cops on bicycles glared at the anarchists as they sang a revised version of "Anarchy in the U.K." written especially for Torrey. Their serenade rang in the cold December night, as police with gas masks bagged at their sides stood at the foot of the steps in tense anticipation. Seattle was still fresh on their minds, too.

Winter is gone now, spring has come. This is the spring of the revolution. This is the year that we make it happen, because the stakes are high, and we cannot afford to lose. As this magazine goes to press, tens of thousands of demonstrators are gearing up to descend on Washington, D.C. for a mass non-violent direct action protest against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank conferences. This mass action promises to be even larger and more intense than the Seattle mobilization, as activists join together in the nation's capitol to demand that decisions about our planet's fate must not be made behind closed doors. In many ways, the IMF and World Bank — both of which are headquartered in Washington D.C. — are the "parents" of the WTO. Together, they form a triumvirate of transnationalism that operates jointly to serve political and corporate elites at the expense of the majority of the world's people. They quietly write the rules that keep the world safe for multinational corporations, while economically depriving billions of people around the globe. A jubilee

2000/USA mobilization will take place on April 9 to demand cancellation of debts for African, Latin American, Asia-Pacific and Caribbean countries. A week of protests, teach-ins, training and direct action is planned for April 9-15, preceding the mass mobilization on Sunday, April 16 and Monday, April 17. Don't forget your gas masks!

May Day Y2K — May 1, 2000 — is the next global day of action. Demonstrators around the world will take to the streets for what may turn out to be the biggest mass protest event in our species' history. Large-scale street parties, parades, demonstrations and direct actions are being planned up and down the west coast of the U.S. And of course, we can expect much mischief from those dastardly black-clad anarchists during the seven weeks of resistance. After that, the Republican and Democratic National conventions will be coming up, both of which should turn out to be boiling cauldrons of political turmoil and heated protest.

Yep, times, they are a changin', or so it seems. Never in my life did I expect to see tens of thousands of people come together to shut down the WTO and forge a revolutionary movement. I didn't have faith that it *could* happen. I didn't think people would *ever* get it together. But then, out of nowhere, it just happened, like truth coming to light.

I never thought I'd see a revolution actually happen in my lifetime, either.

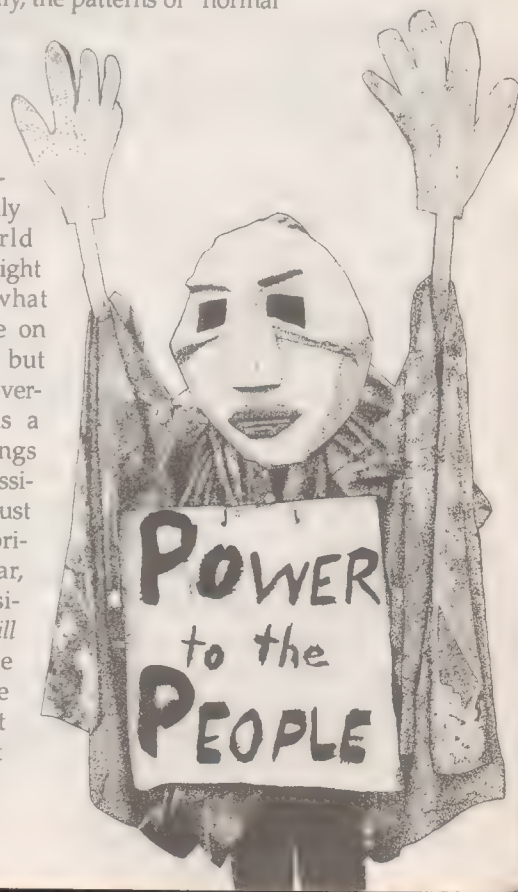
*But then...*

## Afterlogue: The Spirit of Seattle

Even as riot police and National Guardsmen cleared protesters from the streets, the WTO summit floundered. As the hours poured away, the global elite desperately attempted to salvage their smoking wreck of a conference. U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky and WTO director-general Mike Moore arbitrarily called several "Green Room" meetings — secret consultations between ministers of the world's most powerful nations — to "resolve" key points of disagreement. The plan was for the major world powers to reach an agreement amongst themselves, then pressure the other member nations to comply. But their efforts were to no avail. They were trapped between the protesters outside and the ministers of poorer member nations within the WTO. The conference broke up on December 3 with no new agreement, no new round, no agenda — *nothing*. They couldn't even agree on what they would discuss over the next two years. The Death Star was blown to smithereens. The People were victorious.

An estimated 80,000 demonstrators participated in the N30 mobilization. It was without question the most successful and important protest action in the United States since the Vietnam War era. The mainstream media have consistently lowballed the estimated participation at around 50,000. However, if you include the thousands of demonstrators who spontaneously joined the protest later in the week, as well as the tens of thousands who had provided support from home, there may have been more than 100,000 people involved in the N30 operation. And millions of people around the globe stood in solidarity with the Seattle protesters, staging smaller-scale protests and marches worldwide. When that many people, representing so many different causes, acting with little or no organizational structure, come together to engage in mass civil disobedience, they do not merely represent a protest against a corrupt trade organization. They embody the spirit of revolution.

Several people I've talked with have described the N30 experience as "surreal." That's because it *was*. The N30 mobilization tore a hole in the fabric of continuity and opened an egalitarian space where we could demonstrate and freely express ourselves. That sense of genuine freedom burned inside me for days afterwards. Eventually, the patterns of "normal" life took hold again, as everyday reality began to cloud out the freshness of my memories of Seattle. But the whole experience left me profoundly moved. The world didn't change overnight just because of what happened in Seattle on November 30, 1999, but *we* were changed overnight. N30 gave us a vision of how things *could* change, of a possible world that lies just beyond the dark horizon of bigotry, fear, alienation and hesitancy. And things *will* change, because the People want to be free. This is the spirit of Seattle. We must never forget. 0





# When Push Comes to Shove

## The Corporate Media's Reaction to the WTO Seattle Protests

Transcript of an address  
by Norman Solomon

### "Media Spin, the WTO and the Battle of Seattle"

February 17, 2000, 7:30 pm, Columbia 150, University of Oregon campus

Transcript by Charles Overbeck, [easterisle@parascope.com](mailto:easterisle@parascope.com)

WTO Seattle photos by Kurt Jensen

In those dark years before the WTO protests in Seattle, before we had a People's movement in full effect, our beacons were few and far between. But through it all, the writings of media critic Norman Solomon have shone in the shadows of the electronic curtain. Solomon doesn't simply dump out a big bag of political dogma and expect his readers to adhere to his viewpoint — instead, he just tells it like it is, and lets the truth speak for itself. In an era when the establishment's propaganda is pervasive and redundant, Solomon has a knack for finding that loose ideological screw which unhinges the false logic of media capitalism and sends it crashing into idiot chaos.

After the extraordinary events in Seattle, activists everywhere have found themselves engulfed in what has become a global campaign for democracy, economic justice, and local autonomy. Thus, Solomon's previously dispersed, disorganized audience has become a highly radicalized, rapidly organizing movement listening with rapt attention. In recent months, sentiments have been running high in Eugene, Oregon, where activists have been working hard to build on the Seattle confluence. It was no surprise that a full house turned out for Solomon's February 17 talk on the University of Oregon campus in Eugene, where the esteemed media critic shared his views with about 300 people, many of whom had actually participated in the Seattle mobilization.

#### BOOKS BY NORMAN SOLOMON

*The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media* (1999)

*Wizards of Media Oz: Behind the Curtain of Mainstream News* (1997)

*Through the Media Looking Glass* (1995)

*Adventures in Medialand* (1993)

*The Trouble With Dilbert: How Corporate Culture Gets the Last Laugh* (1997)

*False Hope: The Politics of Illusion in the Clinton Era* (1994)

*The Power of Babble: The Politician's Dictionary of Buzzwords and Doubletalk for Every Occasion* (1992)

*Unreliable Sources: A Guide to Detecting Bias in News Media* (1990)

*Killing Our Own: The Disaster of America's Experience With Atomic Radiation* (1982)

**Norman Solomon is currently executive director** of the Institute for Public Accuracy, a nationwide consortium of public-policy researchers. He is the author of "Media Beat," a nationally syndicated column on media and politics. A longtime associate of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, he has written op-ed articles on media issues for many papers, including the *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post*, *Newsday*, *New York Times*, *Miami Herald*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today* and *Baltimore Sun*. Solomon's latest book, *The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media*, recently won the 1999 George Orwell Award for Distinguished Contribution to Honesty and Clarity in Public Language, presented by the National Council of Teachers of English.

For more information on Solomon's column, Media Beat, or to contact Solomon directly, send email to: [mediabeat@igc.org](mailto:mediabeat@igc.org)



**W**ell, for those of you who were in Seattle two long and short weeks ago, it must have been a relief to come back to another part of the United States where freedom prevails, independent journalists need not fear the police, where those who want to exercise their first amendment rights know that without any difficulty, there is a free flow of information.\*

Well, I don't want to be too skeptical. I definitely don't want to be overly cynical. Because if ever there was a time when we needed that pessimism of the mind and the optimism of the will, here we are at the start of this 21st century.

As you know, we began this century with the merger of AOL and Time-Warner. And I think that it provides kind of a retrospective shadow to take another look at the events in Seattle in late November and early December not only because we care about history, distant and recent, but also because the way that we understand the past has everything to do with what we can make possible in the future. As George Orwell put it, "those who control the present control the past, and those who control the past control the future." And so, whether we're talking about what we call history, or we're talking about journalism and contemporary affairs, here we are, with a need to gain as much clarity as possible about what has come before this moment, and then, of course, try to figure out what the hell we do from this point forward — usually easier said than done.

If you kind of back up and look at the build-up to WTO events in the mass media — for instance, you find in *U.S. News and World Report* a few weeks before the summit, an article that talked about how the World Trade Organization was an "obscure" group, and the article puzzled over why people would want to get riled up over what the WTO is.

But I think the best context, maybe, is to look at the last decade, because the kind of coverage in the mass media that took place during those few days in Seattle had everything to do with the kind of media that we've been dealing with for many years.

If you look at last autumn, for instance, and you were to have picked up the

*Washington Post* early on in 1999, you would have seen one morning, above the fold, a headline that said, "Trade Body Summit Targeted for Protests." The article went on to say, on the front page, that the World Trade Organization had long faced "virulent opposition." This wasn't a quotation, it wasn't an attribution — this was from the, we are told, objective voice of the *Washington Post* news reporter. Now, according to my dictionary, the mildest definition of the word "virulent"

Amendment is something on parchment, "chiseled in stone," and yet as a living, breathing reality, it's often gasping for breath.

This is a context in which to try to analyze what we're dealing with: that in a narrow sense, we have profoundly important freedom of speech, and yet we have enormous de facto restrictions on freedom to be heard. And so, as I ended up putting it in a column that ran in the [Eugene] *Register-Guard* last Sunday, the prisoners in this country have

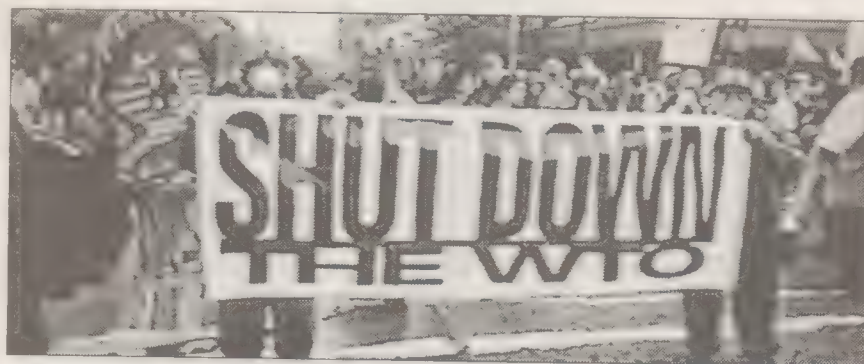
freedom of speech to talk to the walls. And that is literally the case in their situations, but it also symbolizes the restrictions and the problems that those of us without corporate backing face on a regular basis.

I think it's often useful to flip around the telescope and imagine what it looks like to hear through it when you are at the top of a firm like Goldman-Sachs, when you are sitting in the Oval Office or the State Department. And you decide that it's time to bomb people in Yugoslavia, or you decide it's time to put through Congress yet another piece of legislation to make the rich still richer and to rip off working people in this country, legally

and structurally. Do you care, very much, about the exercising of freedom of speech, if it is not rightly heard?

We are conditioned to believe that there is no propaganda system in this country, that propaganda happens in other societies, where you have censorship, where you have commissars and dictators and generals, who will march in and knock on the door in the middle of the night or simply bust their way through to restrict freedom of the press and freedom of speech.

And yet the reality is, here we are at the beginning of the 21st century, and we live under a corporate media system that is as ready, willing and able to censor and restrict information and views as in any other society. The techniques are different, the basis of censorship is different. The censorship is not one hundred percent. But the essence of the propaganda system that we live under is repetition — the code words, the catch phrases, the assumptions and the omissions — that over a long, extended period of time, work



**We have to be wondering, what is the change here that when you or I go to conferences or participate in public events, and we argue for democracy, we're being the radicals? Have we changed? Or has the social context shifted?**

is, and I'm quoting here, "intensely irritating, obnoxious, or harsh." The other definitions were: "extremely poisonous or pathogenic; generally hostile or antagonistic; hateful."

Just to underscore the point, the article went on to go beyond that characterization of the foes of the WTO to prominently quote several pro-WTO sources: the head of the WTO; a top executive at Goldman-Sachs; the U.S. trade representative, Charlene Barshefsky; and a pro-WTO member of the British House of Commons. It was almost impossible to find any opponents of the WTO getting any words in edgewise in that long article.

And this is fairly common in media coverage — not just in economic/corporate globalization issues, but across the board. We hear about people who are out of favor, but we rarely hear from them. There are now nearly two million people behind bars in this country. We hear about them; we rarely hear from them. That, I think, tells us a lot about where the First Amendment is at. The First

\*The following evening, when Solomon spoke at First United Methodist Church, he chastised the Eugene Police Department for seizing a videotape from alternative media journalist Steven Heslin. Heslin was covering a police crackdown on a recent demonstration for the cable access program Cascadia Alive!



what is called the "magic of the free market."

So in effect, we're facing the consolidation of corporate control in a way that seems less and less conspicuous the more it is ubiquitous. The more powerful it is, the less remarked upon it is, because it seems natural. It's everywhere. And when, on the second of January of this year, Gerald Levin, on a panel program on CNN, spoke about the role of global media, he said that the large worldwide media institutions, such as the one he runs, Time-Warner, are, he believes, now more important than governments, more important than educational institutions, and more important than non-profits. In fact, he was saying that — and this doesn't need to be a matter of our conjecture or our statements — the head of Time-Warner was saying that it is the few institutions like Time-Warner that are the most powerful and the most important on the planet Earth.

And somewhere in the backs of our minds, we may remember there was this really arcane concept we used to hear a lot about, and sometimes still do, called democracy... right? I think I may have heard about it somewhere... Civics textbooks, all that kind of stuff... And, we are facing this enormous contradiction, like two plates in the surface of our planetary attitudes and consciousness that are not connecting. There is this enormous amount of conflict between the theory and the reality — the theory of democracy, the concept that people matter, that what you and I think and our involvement in debate and so forth should matter, that that's what democracy is about — and then there's the reality that Gerald Levin cryptically described, which is, to speak metaphorically, much more one dollar/one vote than one person/one vote. And the very concept of democracy as a ruling activity has come to seem quaint. Outmoded. Old fashioned. How passé!

Yet we have to be wondering, what is the change here that when you or I go to conferences or participate in public events, and we argue for democracy, we're being the radicals? Have we changed? Or has the social context shifted?

You know, many Mexican-Americans talk about the fact that their ancestors lived in the same region as they do — they live in California now. Many of these people today live within a few miles, in many instances, of where their great-great-grandparents lived, and yet they're the ones who are supposed to be the foreigners. And one way that's described is, "we didn't cross the border, the border crossed us." And in a similar way, we



**You can date the exact time in history when the five-year free ride that the WTO got in the U.S. press ended. That was sometime mid-day on the last day of November, 1999. That was the day that the "happy face" sticker on the WTO fell off. A lot of the basic mythology of the mass media about economic globalization and the WTO just bit the dust in a hurry.**

didn't move in this radical direction that creates disjunction between us and the prevailing body politic and the mass media, and how issues and possibilities are framed. Something profound has taken place in the last couple of decades — this mania for the "miracle of the markets" as John Stossel, objective ABC news reporter, puts it. This wondrous free market system — the phrase goes, "free markets, free people." That's always interesting — the people who were murdered and tortured by the thugs who operated under the supervision of Gen. Augusto Pinochet would be very surprised to hear that free markets and free peoples go together.

When the Chicago Boys, the disciples of Milton Friedman, went to Chile... It's very interesting to see the kind of rhetoric that we have been getting about the need to privatize social security in the United States. Well,

the fact is, that model was tested out under the fascist boots of Chile, privatizing social security. And now the Cato Institute has a former high official of the Pinochet regime, Mr. Piñera, who now is co-chairing their task force on social security privatization in the United States. The Cato Institute, as you know, is a very powerful think tank in Washington, D.C., it calls itself "libertarian"... I always thought libertarians were

supposed to be opposed to government intrusion, and I would call torture and murder by a government somewhat intrusive.

But if you look at the back pages of the annual report of the Cato Institute, you find that this libertarian outfit is funded by a lot of Fortune 500 companies, which gives you a clue to where a lot of this push for privatization is coming from. The WTO is about simply extending privatization further, like, why stop there? Why not privatize the entire planet? Because that's really what it's about. Public space? Who needs public space? You don't need a library! Y'know, get out your checkbooks, deadbeats! There's bookstores, right?

So where does this stop? The desires for profit are voracious, as Mr. Levin and other media moguls will acknowledge in their candid moments. And where we're headed is

this vision, which is fast becoming a reality, of a few totally dominant — or virtually totally dominant, from a propaganda standpoint — media conglomerates. In 1983, there were 50 corporations that controlled, through ownership, most of the news and information flow in the United States. That's documented by Ben Bagdikian, the former assistant managing editor of the *Washington Post*, in the first edition of his book, *The Media Monopoly*, in 1983. The sixth edition of this same book is coming out next month. And he documents that the number of corporations that now control, through ownership, most of the news and information flow in the United States on a daily basis is now six. Only half a dozen.

You don't need to be a rocket scientist or a social scientist — just plot that on a graph. From 1983 to the year 2000, from 50 to half a



dozen — it seems pretty clear where we're going, I don't think there are any U-turns in the schedule. It's very clear that this is an inexorable progression, or regression. And still, we're told that this doesn't matter. As long as we have a privately-owned media, we have a free media.

But again, to turn that telescope around, if you do want to go to war, and you're in the Oval Office, or if you do want to inch-by-inch privatize social security, it's those 6 corporations and the media that they do and don't provide the American people and the planet — that's what matters. If other people are going to do their web sites, that's all fine and dandy. But from a propaganda standpoint, if you want to go to war, you go with your big propaganda guns, as has happened again and again and again.

Well, to flash back, let's go back six years before the Battle of Seattle. There was a brief flurry of news coverage in the United States about what was called the Uruguay Round of GATT, which set the stage for founding the World Trade Organization. So here's how a news story began on page one of the *New York Times*. I'm quoting here: "Free trade means growth. Free trade means growth. Free trade means growth. Just say it 50 more times, and all doubts will melt away."

Just so the reader didn't miss the point on this front page story in the *New York Times* — the paper of record and the finest journalistic product, we are told, in the country — there was a rather pedantic headline: "How Free Trade Prompts Growth: A Primer." The article concentrated on quoting economists who lauded "free trade" as you might expect. About that time, ABC News anchor Peter Jennings — this was before Disney became the owner of ABC — Peter Jennings introduced a report on what GATT "means for the U.S." There was only one person who was introduced to explain to viewers what GATT "means to the U.S." That one person was a fellow named Mickey Kantor, at the time the head of the U.S. trade delegation. And Mr. Kantor's answer was rather succinct. He said: "jobs, wealth, increased standard of living, growing capital, more profits." So that's what GATT would mean to the United States.

Of course, with less debate than took place for the NAFTA treaty, the GATT pact gained Congressional approval in late 1994 and of course, then the WTO was founded. There was soon after that some action taken that should have been a wake-up call — only, the news media of this country, the mass media, were, I think, as a matter of predilection and disposition, pretty much asleep on this issue. Then in 1996, the World Trade Organization ruled that the U.S. law known as the Clean Air Act was unacceptable because of the restrictions it placed on pollutants in imported gasoline. To make a long story short, the WTO decree on the issue would mean higher

levels of toxic auto emissions, but that whole matter was a blip on the U.S. media screen. Then about five months later, the Clinton administration very quietly complied — which, in the northeastern part of the United States, meant dirtier air, which is kind of a trivial matter, we are led to assume.

But there's something about activism that has a way of percolating up from the grassroots. There was a very notable event, I think, in November of 1997, in the U.S. House of Representatives. Remember, there was that battle over "fast track?" The U.S. House refused to grant "fast track" authority to the President to negotiate trade agreements. And the major media outlets of the country, many, many of them, basically went nuts. The editorials were fast and furious. The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized that the "radical" head of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney, had "busted up a democratic president's attempt to maintain American trade leadership in the emerging global economy. A *New York Times* editorial concluded that "narrow political interests have carried the day." The *Washington Post*, that other leading liberal daily newspaper, editorialized that Congress "caved in to the special pleaders."

This is a kind of theme — the violin has been out on this for at least a decade and a half. When there are election campaigns, you've got that wide-ranging array of members of the punditocracy, you know, from Cokie Roberts to Sam Donaldson to George Will, that really wide spectrum... They talk about how it's so necessary that the Democratic Party will finally shed itself from the grip of the "special interests." So who are the "special interests," these "special pleaders" that the *Washington Post* is talking about as well? Women, environmentalists, workers... you know, these "special interests." Of course, they are distinct from the *national* interest, which, as we know, is Wall Street.

I'm still trying to find a single example from a major media outlet — when the Dow Jones Industrial Average goes through the roof, where are the big stories about how this spike upward in stock prices is inflationary, and creates inflationary pressures? You don't see it, that's a non-concept. But if there's an uptake in wages for American workers, which are known by economic correspondents as "costs," then there's a lot of concern that this could be bad for the economy because it would create inflationary pressures, and we know that bond holders and others with a lot of wealth don't cotton to that kind of inflationary pressure.

This is another quote that I can't pass up before I move along here. This is another flashback to several years before the Battle of Seattle. A lot of the commentary echoed the kind of statements that were made, for instance, by Commerce Secretary William Daley. They were still just so furious that "fast track" hadn't gotten through Congress.

And William Daley depicted people who were opposed to "fast track" and free trade agreements as basically ill-informed dummies. This is what he said: "Even though we all know the benefits of globalization, obviously the people out there don't know it." It kind of reminds me of what Berthold Brecht said when he went back to Germany — he lived in East Germany — this was in the mid-'50s. There were some worker riots there against the government, and of course those recalcitrant and rebellious workers were denounced in the press of the East German regime as being troublemakers and malcontents. And Brecht suggested that if the government didn't like the workers, "it should elect some new ones."

Anyway, if you picked up the *New York Times* a couple of days before the Battle of Seattle really got hot and heavy, you saw a major *New York Times* article which said that protesters "are planning to turn what initially sounded like the yawner of all international meetings — a gathering of trade ministers from 135 countries to start the millennial round of trade global issue talks — into the Woodstock of the era of globalization." How's that for shedding all stereotypes, and freshly reporting the shift of the objective conditions in our society?

I think you can date the exact time in history when the five-year free ride that the WTO got in the U.S. press ended, you can date the exact moment. And that was sometime mid-day on the last day of November, 1999. There were probably a lot of people in this room who helped make it happen. That was the day that the "happy face" sticker on the WTO fell off. And it fell off because it could no longer be made to stick, because a lot of the basic mythology of the mass media about economic globalization and the WTO — that mythology just bit the dust in a hurry.

A lot of the mythology, I think, had to do with the notion that what happens at the grassroots doesn't matter. Another component was that social reality is what the *New York Times* and NPR and the News Hour — or should I say "Snooze Hour?" — the News Hour with Jim Lehrer... social reality is what these kinds of institutions say it is. So, here are these quaint people out there at the grassroots, they have their teach-ins and their forums and their pickets and their newsletters, and they're complaining about economic globalization, and yes, there's some dissent here and there in society, but basically that doesn't matter. Because the people who know best have this firmly in hand.

Obviously, when there was the outpouring of protests in Seattle, that represented so clearly so many varied constituencies — environmentalists, human rights activists, economic justice activists, labor unions, organized and unorganized workers, religious activists, Native American activists.... We could go on and on about the different



so-called categories, and yet one of the things that happened in Seattle was that to a large extent, those categories either blurred or disappeared. Because it was about the planet, it was about the future of human beings at a time when, every day, 20,000 children die from preventable diseases. Every day. So when we talk about the future of free markets, this sort of reality is supposed to melt away, according to the mass media.

I think there was a powerful logic to what took place that of course could not be remarked upon directly in the mass media. And that is the following: that contempt for democracy breeds more contempt for democracy. When the tear gas, and the rubber bullets, and the pepper spray, and the canisters exploded in the streets of Seattle, when martial law was essentially declared and implemented and downtown became a militarized zone, this was what it was. But it was also a metaphor, a parable, for what corporate power is all about. It was supremely logical, because the people who are in charge of the WTO — those who have control of the political economy — believe that they've got to do whatever it takes to get what they want. Which in this case is more and more agreements that can supersede any semblance of democracy, or legislation that is passed with some sort of a democratic process.

When you hear about a peace process — a peace process in the middle east, or somewhere else — of course, authoritarian regimes prefer peace, as long as they get their way. They don't want to spend all that money on tear gas and bullets. They would rather just say, "come along peacefully now." But when push comes to shove — when Madeleine Albright can't get out of her hotel — I mean, this is their planet, they paid for it! Then, steps have to be taken. And so this liberal facade — I don't know, I'm just guessing, but we probably all live near a lot of liberal facades — the liberal facades have a way of crumbling when the interests of capital are threatened.

And really, when you look at the major media outlets, those that reach millions and millions of people every day, they are absolutely about maintaining and widening corporate domination. That is literally, as the French would say, their *raison d'être* — their reason for being. Yet, that's totally contrary to the mythology that we're getting. Because we are supposed to listen to "All Things

Considered" and believe that somehow, this bogus alternative represents some significant exercise in journalistic freedom. Yet if you look at the content involved — I was talking about the need for having access to propaganda outlets so that if powerful people decide it's time to go to war, there's not going to be a big hubub about it. They hope.

So, we know that when the missiles have been fired against — it's hard to keep track of all the countries. Let's leave out countries like Pakistan, which has been hit by U.S. missiles by mistake, we're told — in a period of 10 months, it was Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and Yugoslavia, all attacked by U.S. cruise missiles. When you're in that kind of situation, then you want to have an outlet like National

**Just because there is a wall doesn't mean there aren't cracks; but just because there are cracks doesn't mean there isn't a wall. The wall is about propaganda. The crack is about the fact that we do have freedom of speech, we have a lot of creative energy, we have many people who are journalists and non-journalists alike, who are fighting and yelling and kicking and screaming to break through that wall, and we are able to create cracks in that wall. That's nothing to denigrate.**

Public Radio. And you want to have "All Things Considered" and "Morning Edition." They are especially useful, because the elite — that 20 percent or so that demographically have the most money, are the most educated, have the most influence in their local communities and policy roles in organizations and so forth — they're really plugged in, the trust level is high. And then the mask has got to slip a little bit, because push has come to shove, just like push came to shove on November 30 of last year in Seattle. So then, "NPR" stands for National Pentagon Radio. Then you have a clear channel for NATO headquarters, and the State Department, and the Pentagon, and the Oval Office. We've got a very effective propaganda system... which is not 100 percent. And this is, what I think, throws us sometimes.

I don't for a minute downplay the importance of the First Amendment, and my freedom and your freedom of speech. But the essence of propaganda is repetition, and if those other voices are heard once in a while, that doesn't change the effect of the propaganda. The people who are trying to sell us Nikes, or Winstons, or new automobiles or whatever — they understand that. Those who want us

to believe that our lives would be much better if we trade on the stock market, if we get our computer so we can buy and sell stock through E\*TRADE or AmeriTrade — they understand that. They don't put one commercial on TV and forget it. They run a commercial again and again and again.

For example, I think there's something wrong with the AmeriTrade slogan. You know, at the end of commercials on TV, it says AmeriTrade, and then it says, "AmeriTrade: Believe in yourself." So, I get on the radio, I'm lucky enough to get on television once in a great while, and I say, "there's something wrong with a corporate culture that tells people that their value and belief in themselves has something to do

with making money on the stock market." The fact that I can say that once in a while is important, but it doesn't disrupt the impact of a hundred million people over the course of the next few months repeatedly seeing the message, "AmeriTrade: Believe in yourself" and how exciting it is to do that.

The warmakers, in the same way, don't require 100 percent censorship. The corporate warmakers — those who are leading the charge for corporate warfare, and I think we can say in an accurate way, class warfare.... You know, in the political parlance, class warfare is a bad thing, nobody should be

engaging in that. Every time you talk about how the wealthy are ripping off the rest of us, fight the corporate power, etc., the punditocracy says, "that's engaging class warfare." What they really mean is, "that's the wrong kind of class warfare. We believe in it from the top down. You might even start engaging it from the bottom up, that's a bad thing."

In the case of this continuity of repetition, as it continues, we're faced with this echo chamber that resonates again and again and again. The echo chamber is this western corporatized mass media propaganda drum that's beating. We're expected to confuse the beating of that drum with the beating of our own hearts — because we have so little left once we buy into the messages of commercialism and corporate power.

From a propaganda standpoint, we are up against a very big and very thick wall. At the same time, there are cracks in the wall. And I think it's a useful metaphor to understand how it is that even some of the creepiest media institutions in the country, like *Time* magazine, can sometimes produce really fine journalism, like the cover story on big money and politics a couple of weeks ago by Jim Steele and Don Barlett. To me, the



metaphor of the wall is really helpful there. Just because there is a wall doesn't mean there aren't cracks; but just because there are cracks doesn't mean there isn't a wall. The wall is about propaganda. The wall is about that continuity, that repetition of message. The crack is about the fact that we do have freedom of speech, we have a lot of creative energy, we have many people who are journalists and non-journalists alike, who are fighting and yelling and kicking and screaming to break through that wall, and we are able to create cracks in that wall. That's nothing to denigrate.

But it doesn't change the fact that there are these retaining structures that set structural limits on what kind of public discourse we can have. And these limits on public discourse largely undermine the possibilities for authentic democracy. We have this kind of shell. We have the rituals. We go out and vote once or twice every year or two. The form is there, the form of democracy is there. But it's like a shell that has the vitality sucked out from it.

Then we have the spectacle, once in a while, where against all the odds, people from around the planet — in the case of the Seattle summit — came to one spot and brought together, coalesced, the resistance into a form in a way that could not be ignored. It simply could not be swept under the rock. So a lot of damage control had to be done. Of course, Bill Clinton and Barshefsky and so forth did their best to explain that they really had the same concerns as the people in the streets. They worry about all those poor people. They worry about labor rights. They want to have a humane world... that is run by corporations. The message was clearly out, in that way, within a couple of days of the beginning of the summit. And yet, there they were, with the rubber bullets and the pepper spray, because the corporate show must go on.

When we stop and think back, we remember of course that a few dozen window-smashers got enormous mass media attention. Meanwhile, on the same day, Tuesday November 30, a few thousand people engaged in direct, militant, non-violent blockades of the summit that brought together some of the most rapacious forces on the planet under one roof. And almost that entire first day of that summit was canceled not because of a few dozen window smashers, but because thousands of people, who in the spirit of Ghandi and Martin Luther King and the thousands of people who were in those movements, in that spirit, they organized themselves and shut down the WTO.

It's almost like a riddle. You've got a few dozen people who smashed some windows who had no effect on shutting down the WTO summit, and you've got a few thousand people engaging in militant non-violence who prevent the first day of the summit

from taking place. So who gets the media focus?

In a way, I think we can make a very strong case that the window smashers in Seattle and the corporate media really needed each other. And in a way, they really loved each other. And in a way, they really imitated each other. And they got off on each other. And in a way, they operated — whatever their motivations, in practice, they operated with a somewhat similar ethic. Solidarity is stupid. I'm going to watch my back. I'm going to take care of myself. If you read the so-called communiqué that was put out by the Acme Collective, there's a passage in there that talks about, "We were really well organized. We watched each others' backs. We went in, and we smashed the windows, and we disappeared. And nobody could find us. Because we eluded the police." That's supposed to be really great. Meanwhile, their comrades were out there facing the billy clubs and the rubber bullets. How much more wonderful it would have been, if in the spirit of anarchism that has been so wonderful for centuries, people had been in solidarity with the tens of thousands of demonstrators, in solidarity with those who quite courageously didn't just watch their backs and disappear — those who went and blockaded and disrupted and shut down the WTO summit.

I think it's fair to say that in the course of the coverage, it was a real easy out — and I don't blame the window smashers for this — it was an easy out for the mass media. Because filming, and replaying, again and again, windows being smashed — that's easy. Anybody can do that, if you're a camera-person or a TV producer, anybody can film windows being smashed. Nobody with any power is going to get mad at you. People with power want that on TV. It's much better than showing thousands and thousands of people who organized themselves in a syndicalist way to shut down the WTO non-violently. Because if we can shut down the WTO non-violently by organizing ourselves, maybe we can shut down Wall Street. Maybe we can shut down the Pentagon for a day. (I'm being a moderate, I said "for a day.") That would be a very dangerous model.

It's really quite interesting, the lack of curiosity that the mass media have. As many people know, who have been involved in militant direct action — non-violent civil disobedience, that goes beyond mere symbolism to try to shut things down that need badly to be shut down — it takes a lot of work. The mass media don't teach us how to do it. They don't have movies of the week to show us how people did this. Even in the *Norma Rae* kind of movies, there's this one brilliant organizer, and the rest of us are just kind of clunky dummies waiting for this inspirational person to show up and to show us that we can organize.

Of course, in the real world, when these

great things happen, it is because many people are activated and politicized and organized, and there are ways to then proceed in a manner that can be duplicated and replicated again and again. That can be very dangerous. Anybody can throw a brick through a window. Anybody. I don't care whether it's in Eugene or Seattle, anybody can put on a mask or a hood and throw a brick through a window, and frankly, sometimes we don't know who the hell these people are. We really don't. Are they neo-Nazis? Are they progressive anarchists? We don't know. All we know is... [Commotion and comments from the audience.] We don't know, we really don't know. We don't know. All we can go by is, what is the behavior, and what is the effect. I mean, I've done counter-productive things in my life, we all have. So I don't think we should judge harshly.

I think it is useful to consider an old Chinese proverb that goes back many centuries: When you are in a battle, don't do what you most want to do — do what your opponent least wants you to do. And in the battle that we're in, the corporate powers on this planet do not want us to organize wide participation in militant, non-violent syndicalist actions to shut down their machinery. They don't want that. And I think we really do. I think many people really do. We're taught how not to do those kinds of things. We're taught to be passive, whether it is by the mass media, or the universities, whether it's high school or post-graduate doctoral institutions, we are largely taught to internalize the values and the methodologies of the prevailing system, and to not rock too many boats, and not step on too many toes. And I think that the subversive sensibilities that exist in this room, that exist in thousands of communities around this country, and of course around the world — those subversive sensibilities have enormous opportunities in the next few years, despite all the media bias. We have enormous openings to build on what happened in Seattle, because what happened in Seattle built on what was done for many, many years before that.

Of course, it was a huge surprise to the mass media, what took place in Seattle. The mass media journalists, almost without exception, made the serious mistake of believing what they had reported before the Seattle events. I mean, talk about being misinformed — these reporters believed their own reporting! So naturally, when they got to Seattle, they had no preparation to realistically expect what might occur. Then you've got the members of the punditocracy, and they are not only at these kinds of high profile events, but they are routinely sounding their particular alarms about where the "threat" is coming from. You know, those "special interests," for instance. Those subversive special interests, those selfish people — they want health care, they're so selfish...





**"IT SENT A CLEAR MESSAGE..."**

Solomon exchanges views with a Eugene activist on the "window smashing" controversy.

## Divide and Conquer:

**Hysteria over "window smashing violence" threatens to drive a wedge down the center of a potent new political movement**

Norman Solomon's comments about "window smashers" (see previous page) met a decidedly mixed response when he spoke on February 17, and also during his address at First United Methodist Church the following evening. Many in the audience enthusiastically supported his position. But others, whose solidarity with the anarchists transcends a few broken windows, found themselves somewhat irritated by Solomon's comments on this subject. Solomon seems to use the words "window smashers" interchangeably with the word "anarchists," which is a mistaken assumption with propagandistic overtones. He speaks of the very real need for solidarity, yet argues his position in this case through judgmental and derisive statements about the boldest, most radical element of the movement.

If solidarity is the answer, then it makes no sense to accuse the anarchists of somehow "messing things up for the rest of us," when the acts of vandalism in Seattle were simply insignificant compared to the rampant violence used by police to clear democracy demonstrators away from the WTO summit. Solomon generally characterizes the anarchist community as a pack of hooligans; particularly disturbing was his suggestion that their black-hooded anonymity may provide cover for neo-Nazis. He advises the anarchists to operate "in a syndicalist way," yet of course, many anarchists describe themselves as anarcho-syndicalists, who seek out voluntary associations to affect social change, no different than any of the other protesters who showed up in Seattle.

During the question and answer session following Solomon's talk on February 18, several Eugene activists took Solomon to task regarding his "window smashing anarchists" comments.

"To me, it sent a clear message about how people felt about the WTO, about how people felt about capitalism in general," said activist Robin Terranova.

"Personally, it sent a clear message to me," Solomon replied. "But it's not just about you and me. It's about building a social movement that is radical and viable, and isn't so far from the progressive base — which is moving in a more radical direction — that it fails to help build that movement."

Solomon then qualified his comments somewhat. "I understand that people perhaps out of really good intentions took the actions and made the plans and went forward and did some window smashing in that context. And surely, when we talk about violence, the violent criminality represented in that city that was abhorrent was by people like [WTO chief] Mike Moore, Bill Clinton and Madeleine Albright. There's no question, that's a granted. But we're still ultimately confronted with the question of, how do we build a movement in a way that does push in a more radical direction? I totally agree with you — I draw from what you're saying — that it's not enough to say we're going to stay dead center in the center of where the progressive movement is right now."

Solomon said he was interested in engaging in a dialogue with the anarchists regarding their tactics, and I don't doubt his sincerity one bit. I hope he will continue to actively seek out dialogue with the anarchists in his community and get to know them a little better. He may find, on closer examination, that the anarchists are already exploring alternatives to the fascist system of corporate autocracy. But in our present economic system — in which prisoners are forced to work at slave wages to produce goods and services for private corporations — property destruction as a form of protest is political expression, regardless of the law.

Lastly, we must remember that Solomon's views on the anarchists are his own. City University of New York professor Frances Fox Piven offered an entirely different perspective when she came to Eugene to participate in a "Work, Welfare and Politics" conference from February 28-29. Piven, one of America's foremost scholars on welfare and poverty in the United States, was not overly concerned with the window smashing — "as though breaking windows was the greatest travesty to ever occur in the U.S.," she said during an interview with the *Eugene Weekly*. "Voting matters mainly when there are insurgents raising issues to which people can respond," Piven said. "The anarchist contingent from Eugene is to be applauded for drawing the attention of the mainstream press to the movement."

—Charles Overbeck, [easterisle@parascopes.com](mailto:easterisle@parascopes.com)

Why can't they think of the national interest? They want to stop pollution, they want to challenge human rights, they're so self-centered, these special interests.

And this is kind of the tone... Think of Cokie Roberts, her and her husband, Steve Roberts, who is often on *Washington Week in Review*, a program on PBS, you know, the [inaudible] Broadcasting Service... That's that pathbreaking show every Friday night where conventional journalists share conventional wisdom for half an hour. Actually, I wanted to nominate the program for a name change and call it *Whitewashington Week in Review*... There's a point here, I do have one somewhere...

So Steve Roberts is on the program now quite a lot, and Cokie, of course, is beloved as the political analyst on both National Public Radio and ABC News (she sounds the same on both, which should tell you a lot). They made a speech a few years ago to a banker's association in Chicago, and their fee was \$40,000. And Cokie Roberts, on national television during the UPS strike, said, "What are these truckers complaining about? Why do they need to go on strike? They make \$40,000 a year!" So there you have the proper ratio: because she's a pundit, she should make approximately 365 times what the truck driver should make, and that's called equity.

You know that program on CNN, *Capital Gain*? Where you have people like Al Huntz — he represents the left on *Capital Gain*. Al Huntz, who for many years was the Washington bureau chief of the *Wall Street Journal*. Only in the mass media of the United States can you have a high official of the Dow Jones Corporation put forward as speaking for the international proletariat, right?

Well, after the events in Seattle, of course, the media powers that be were stunned. Many of them were furious. You would have thought that the world had been turned upside down. It really struck me what occurred in the days and weeks after the end of the Seattle summit on December 3, it was kind of like the stages of grief, you know... first, we have shock.. You know, we have to be patient with these folks, they're up against some new realities, and of course they had been misled by their own punditry and their own reporting. They were unprepared. So naturally, they were shocked when there was some semblance of democratic participation in these events. The corporate elite of the planet threw a party, and these other people crashed it!

But this is a different version of democracy. I remember being outside King County Jail, about the third or fourth night of that week. There were many people locked inside, and there were a couple of thousand of us outside. And the most frequently heard chant that night was, "This is what democracy looks like!" That really does not compute in



the mass media concept of things. What they think democracy looks like is, you go and you vote. You let the corporate elites decide who deserves the millions of dollars the year before, so they can be counted as serious candidates, and then you get to choose from the choices that have been handed down to you. One of the questions I dread is, "Who do you think is better — Dan Rather, Peter Jennings or Tom Brokaw?" My answer is, "What do you think is better — Camels, Winstons or Salems?" Our options. And they call it democracy, right? They call that democracy.

So in any event, when they were in shock, they had to come to terms with the fact that they had misjudged certain realities. I think we can understand that partly by the class position, and the class identification, that these journalists have. They make a good income — most journalists are not rich, but the ones we see on national television are, if we see them very often. If they and their bosses weren't in such high income brackets, they probably would've understood more how the other half lives, and how the other half thinks. And I mean that quite literally.

If you look at some of the data that are available.... There was a Pew Research Center survey.... And don't get me started on Pew, that's a whole 'nother story.... What a great name, what a fitting name for a very powerful foundation funding a lot of the mass media, including so-called Public Broadcasting. But they do good surveys. Let's face it, the news media are very good at telling us the ball scores, and some things are very accurate, so let's not put them down for that. A Pew Research Center survey last spring found that "among Americans in families earning \$75,000 or more, 63 percent see globalization as positive. Among the half of American adults in families earning less than \$50,000, the positive view of globalism is held by just 37 percent." A bit of a clue.

Of course, we have a taboo about talking about class politics. When I was at the 1980 Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, I was talking with some reporters from Mexico, and they said, "Well this is very interesting, but you know, this convention is not politics, this is show business. When we talk about politics in Mexico, we talk about class. Because that's reality. Here, it's just kind of a variety show."

In a way, we have all these markers and these euphemisms for class. We talk about "people of color" — of course, poverty falls disproportionately on Native Americans, African Americans and Latinos, so obviously we should and have to be talking about challenging racism. But often we find the mass media avoiding the issues of class, which are threaded into the issues of racism,

as well as class issues being important in their own right.

But in any event, we've got this record of what occurred during "shock," but after shock came denial, as often happens in the stages of grief. If you looked at the cover story in *Newsweek*, right after the Seattle summit, you found that the story described the WTO as, I'm quoting here, "the small Geneva-based bureaucracy that the United States and 134 other nations set up 5 years ago to referee local commerce." Sounds pretty benign, don't you think?

A few days before that, the *New York Times* syndicated columnist Thomas Friedman wrote, "The more countries trade with one another, the more they need an institution to set the basic rules of trade, and that is all the WTO does." I think that qualifies as denial.

Of course, after denial came anger. So you have, for instance, Thomas Friedman, writing in the middle — as he saw that this whole thing was being ripped apart, and his whole dream of another successful WTO summit was in tatters, was coming unraveled, he devoted a column to lashing out at anti-WTO protesters, who he described as "a Noah's Ark of flat earth advocates, protectionist trade unions, and yuppies looking for their 1960's fix." A week later, he had calmed down a little bit. But he couldn't hold back his tears of rage, and this is what he wrote: "The biggest negative fallout from Seattle is the way it smeared free trade."

And then, of course, there was a lot of sadness, which I think we could say, to some extent, has continued to this day.

Well, I don't want to go on too much longer here, I'm looking forward to your comments, and your questions if you have some. But let me close, before I go, with a couple of points, because I think they really epitomize what we're dealing with in terms of the overall tenor of mass media coverage of these issues.

The largest circulation newsweekly in the United States is *Time* magazine, and their response to what happened at the summit was a little bit more policy-wonkish. They devoted seven pages mostly to policy analysis. The main story, next to the last paragraph, closed with this quote from a U.S. Chamber of Commerce official: "Those who want to promote trade are going to have to make their case much more vigorously to all the American people." And then *Time* magazine, in its own voice, concluded, referring to this case for trade that the chamber of commerce guy wants to advance: "It is a pretty compelling case, and if they can make it with anywhere near the vigor that was demonstrated by the 'anti's' last week in Seattle, free trade may yet win the day."

But then of course, you have to have the commentators. And *Time* magazine, in that edition, chose to have two commentaries run about what had taken place in Seattle. Charles Krauthammer wrote a piece that was headlined, "Return of the Luddites." And Mr. Krauthammer mocked what he called the "kooky crowd" protesting in Seattle, which he described as the following: "one-world paranoids, apolitical luddites who refuse to accept that growth, prosperity and upward living standards always entail some dislocation...." I think malnutrition and starvation is a pretty good example of "some dislocation" myself.... He also described them as "the leftover Left" and his essay was typeset around a photo of union activists protesting the WTO, and the caption under the photo said, "Kooky crowd: Motley remnants of the old left found their voice in Seattle." And this, of course, is *Time* magazine explaining it all to us.

Now, of course, you have to have balance. So to balance out Charles Krauthammer's column in *Time*, the same issue had a column by Michael Kinsley. You remember Michael Kinsley from *Crossfire*, you know, "I'm not a leftist but I play one on TV?" And *Time* magazine gave Kinsley a page to explain the errors of anti-WTO thinking. Now, he's really disentangled from the power structure — he's the editor of Microsoft's online publication, *Slate*, and he writes for the flagship magazine of Time-Warner, the largest media conglomerate on the planet. So you can expect to get a well-reasoned and balanced perspective from him. Kinsley wrote his column as basically an ode to what we are told is "free trade." And the end of this column was as follows: "But really, the WTO is okay. Do the math, or take it on faith."

Noam Chomsky well described this type of media. This is the way he put it: "Among history's striking regularities is that those who are in a position to impose their projects not only hail them with enthusiasm, but also typically benefit from them, whether the values professed involve free trade or other grand principles, which turn out in practice to be finely tuned to the needs of those running the game and cheering the outcome."

George Orwell said, half a century ago, that "if liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear." And in the case of corporate America, they don't want to hear that our bends will not go in their direction. We will not worship their almighty billions. We will not defer to their power. And, despite all of their hands on all of the levers of institutional clout, we will resist. And they don't want to hear it. But they need to hear it, and so do we.

Thank you for being here. O

---

A VHS videotape of Norman Solomon's February 17 & 18 lectures, including question-and-answer sessions, is available for \$8.00 to ParaScope, 1430 Willamette PMB #329, Eugene, OR 97401.



# WTO Seattle Videos

In the guerrilla information war, your camera is your gun. Reflect on that for a moment, and you'll realize that the police were actually firing tear gas and rubber bullets at *themselves*. A rubber bullet might hurt, but it probably won't kill you. Videotape, on the other hand, is forever.

The following three documentaries are highly recommended, but there are dozens more out there circulating hand-to-hand, and several larger-scale documentaries by independent film studios are currently in production.



## RIP WTO N30

**\$5 to pickAxe productions, 1430 Willamette PMB #506, Eugene, OR 97401**

Activist/videographers Tim Lewis and Tim Ream produced this 15-minute mini-documentary while N30 was actually happening; by the next morning, they were on the streets with 2,000 copies. The footage is as raw and alive and instantaneous as the N30 experience itself. The veteran hand of Tim Lewis steadily records astounding scenes of police violence against passive, non-violent protesters. Tim Ream, his editing skills honed by years of experience with live cable access broadcasting, spins the footage together with finesse. Very well done.



## Showdown in Seattle

**Version 1: 5-part series, 30 mins each, \$30-55 sliding scale**

**Version 2: Compilation tape, 1 hr, \$15-25 sliding scale**

**IMC, 1415 3rd Ave., Seattle, WA 98101 [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org)**

The Independent Media Center is a voluntary media collective which came together to break the corporate media blockade of the WTO Seattle protests. It was a tremendous success, which will be repeated during the A16 mobilization in Washington, D.C. The *Showdown in Seattle* series is a collection of segments produced by a collaboration of videographers from all over the U.S. These programs were produced daily on location and satellitecast to cable access stations throughout the country on each day of the WTO ministerial.



## WTO SEATTLE: N30

**\$5 to ParaScope, 1430 Willamette PMB #329, Eugene, OR 97401**

ParaScope's 40-minute videography gives a street-level view of the N30 mobilization. Features footage of street theater, the Five Minutes of Silence, and the 3:15 skirmish at 4th & Pike, where protesters held their ground against a barrage of tear gas and concussion grenades. If you were at 6th and Pike for the Five Minutes of Silence, you should definitely check this tape out. Comes with a free packet of Dramamine to counteract the effects of the "Blair Witch"-style footage.

## Also:

**LABOR BEAT** has a 4-episode tape on the WTO protests featuring protester interviews and footage of police repression. Contact 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60607, 312-226-3330, [laborbeat@fs.freepress.org](mailto:laborbeat@fs.freepress.org), [www.wwa.com/~bgfolder/lb](http://www.wwa.com/~bgfolder/lb)

**CASCADIA ALIVE!** broadcast a lot of good footage following N30. Contact P.O. Box 12226, Eugene, OR 97440.



## internet resources

## weblinks

### A16: Mobilization for Global Justice

<http://www.a16.org/>

Information on the April 16 & 17 direct action to shut down the IMF and the World Bank. Action guidelines, medical info, housing info & more.

### Mayday2k Protest

<http://www.mayday2k.org/>

Let our resistance be as global as their economy! On May 1, 2000, take part in a global day of action, resistance and carnival. Check out this site for more info.

### indymedia D.C.

<http://dc.indymedia.org/>

The Independent Media Center's online headquarters for the A16 mobilization. Check this site for live webcasts, video footage & more.

### Direct Action Network

<http://www.agitprop.org/artandrevolution/index.html>

DAN — the Direct Action Network — was instrumental in the N30 mobilization and victory. In the process of building off the successes of Seattle, DAN is working to develop a new form of direct democracy which aims to transform society into a confederated union of local autonomous communities.

### People's Global Action

<http://www.agp.org/agp/index.html>

People's Global Action Against "Free" Trade and the WTO was the first group to engage in mass action against the forces of neoliberal globalization. Find out how you can take part in the upcoming global days of action.

### Electronic Activism & Electronic Civil Disobedience

<http://www.gn.apc.org/pmhp/ehippies/>

The electrohippies are taking activism onto the Internet. Check out the Electrohippies Action Page to take "Denial of Service" action against the global biotech industry and to participate in other distributed e-actions.

### WTO Police Suspects

<http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/seattle/spd/wto/spdwto suspecthome.htm>

The Seattle Police Department's "rat page" for the WTO protests. Unfortunately, the police themselves are not among the criminals listed on this web page.

### Davos Protest

<http://www.cyberjedi.org.uk/davos.htm>

Information on the January 29, 2000, protest against the World Economic Forum's meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. Photos, news & more.

### Gardening as an Anarchist Plot

<http://www.rain.org/%7Ephilfear/garden.html>

Eat free, be free. Become an urban terracist! Advice on biointensive vegetable gardening in raised beds, as a positive action to increase one's freedom and independence.



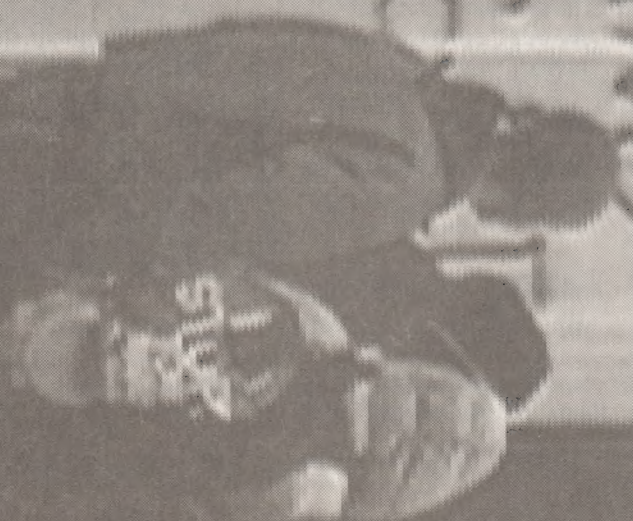
### pickAxe productions

<http://www.pickaxe.org/>

It's not just entertainment — it's evidence! Guerrilla videographers Tim Lewis and Tim Ream distribute their films through pickAxe productions: *RIP WTO N30*, a mini-documentary on the WTO protests (see facing page), and *pickaxe*, a new documentary on the struggle to save an ancient forest from destruction. Protesters faced down bulldozers, police and federal agents during their blockade of the Warner Creek salvage logging operation. This powerful documentary culminates with a mass jail break-in after activists are denied entry to a public arraignment.



WE ARE WINNING  
DON'T FORGET



NOV. 30 1998